

Different understandings of corporate social responsibility: A case study among investors and middle managers

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Abstract

There are almost as many interpretations of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as there are people interpreting it. This ambiguity related to the concept of CSR makes its development in companies significantly more difficult. This study concentrates on different understandings of corporate social responsibility and the practical implications of these for the case company. The study answers the research question of what kinds of understandings of corporate social responsibility exist, especially how do selected investors and case company's middle managers understand the concept and what kinds of consequences do these understandings have on the development of corporate social responsibility in the case company.

Previous research is reviewed covering the development of CSR over time, different classifications of CSR, basics about socially responsible investment (SRI) and different investors' motives for SRI. It is shown that the concept and meaning of CSR has significantly developed and very different kinds of ways of approaching CSR exist. Also different investors have fairly different kinds of motives for investing in a socially responsible way.

From a philosophical point of view this study represents an interpretivist approach. The study is a qualitative case study in the context of a Finnish case company working in the fields of construction and building services. The selected investors are owners of the case company and all of them have significant operations in Finland.

The results show that the investors had a very structured and uniform way of understanding CSR whereas the middle managers of the case company represented several different understandings. There were also great differences between the understandings of the investors and middle managers. However, when it comes to the actual CSR activities and contents the thoughts were very similar from the different viewpoints.

The theoretical background and empirical results of this study provoked reflections related to business' role in society, to the differences between personal and organizational approaches to CSR as well as related to the results' practical consequences for the case company. The discussion around CSR leads easily to a question of what role business should serve in society. Also it seemed that the understandings on CSR and business' role in society differ from personal and organizational viewpoints. Finally the results of this study mean that there exists a great communicational challenge for the case company and its personnel communicating with the case company's owners.

Keywords corporate social responsibility, socially responsible investment, business and society

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Yritysvastuu-käsitteen merkityksestä on olemassa lähes yhtä monta tulkintaa, kuin on ihmisiä tulkitsemassa sitä. Tämä yritysvastuu-käsitteen monitulkintaisuus hankaloittaa huomattavasti yritysvastuun kehittämistä yrityksissä. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy erilaisiin tapoihin ymmärtää yritysvastuuta ja näiden käytännön seuraamuksiin case-yritykselle. Tutkimuskysymykset, joihin tutkimus vastaa, ovat: minkälaisia tapoja ymmärtää yritysvastuuta on olemassa, erityisesti miten valitut sijoittajat ja case-yrityksen keskijohto ymmärtävät kyseisen käsitteen ja minkälaisia seuraamuksia näillä eri ymmärryksillä on yritysvastuun kehittämislle case-yrityksessä.

Olemassa olevaa tutkimusta käsitellään kattaen yritysvastuun kehittyminen aikojen saatossa, erilaiset yritysvastuun luokittelut, perusasiat vastuullisesta sijoittamisesta ja erilaisten sijoittajien motiivit vastuulliselle sijoittamiselle. Yritysvastuun käsite ja sen merkitys ovat kehittyneet huomattavasti ja hyvin erilaisia tapoja lähestyä yritysvastuuta on olemassa. Myös erilaisilla sijoittajilla on melko erilaisia motiiveja vastuulliselle sijoittamiselle.

Filosofisesta näkökulmasta tämä tutkimus edustaa tulkitsevaa lähestymistapaa. Tutkimus on laadullinen tapaustutkimus, jonka kontekstina toimii suomalainen case-yritys, joka toimii rakentamisen ja kiinteistöpalveluiden toimialoilla. Valitut sijoittajat ovat case-yrityksen omistajia ja niillä kaikilla on merkittävää liiketoimintaa Suomessa.

Tulokset osoittavat, että sijoittajilla oli hyvin jäsentynyt ja yhtenäinen tapa ymmärtää yritysvastuuta, kun taas case-yrityksen keskijohto edusti useita eri ymmärryksiä. Sijoittajien ja keskijohdon ymmärrysten välillä oli myös huomattavia eroja. Tästä huolimatta, kun kyseessä on yritysvastuun toiminnot ja sisällöt, ajatukset olivat hyvin samanlaisia eri näkökulmista.

Tämän tutkimuksen teoreettinen tausta ja empiiriset tulokset herättivät pohdintaa liittyen liiketoiminnan rooliin yhteiskunnassa, henkilökohtaisen ja organisaatiolähtöisen lähestymistavan eroihin yritysvastuusta sekä liittyen tulosten käytännön seuraamuksiin case-yritykselle. Yritysvastuuseen liittyvä keskustelu johtaa helposti kysymykseen siitä, mikä rooli liiketoiminnalla tulisi olla yhteiskunnassa. Vaikutti myös siltä, että ymmärrykset yritysvastuusta ja liiketoiminnan roolista yhteiskunnassa eroavat henkilökohtaisesta ja organisatorisesta näkökulmasta katsottuna. Lopuksi tämän tutkimuksen tulokset tarkoittavat, että case-yrityksellä ja sen henkilökunnalla, joka kommunikoi case-yrityksen omistajien kanssa, on olemassa suuri viestinnällinen haaste.

Avainsanat yritysvastuu, vastuullinen sijoittaminen, liiketoiminta ja yhteiskunta

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1 Introduction

This master's thesis starts by presenting a background and motivation for the study. It is followed by a description of the research problems and objectives, as well as the definition used in this study for the concept of "an understanding of corporate social responsibility". Thirdly the research methodology and scope of the study are explained.

1.1 Background and motivation

Corporate social responsibility, corporate responsibility, corporate sustainability, environmental responsibility, corporate citizenship, corporate ethics... The phenomenon has been developing and debated for decades and there are also several different terms used for it, with slightly different meanings. However, still a lack of agreement exist on the exact meaning of let's say corporate social responsibility and its contents. Depending on the definition of the phenomenon, also the motives behind it and objectives which organizations try to achieve when talking about it differ.

This lack of clarity has its consequences. The writer of this thesis has worked among corporate social responsibility issues in the case company for almost three years at the time of writing this thesis. During these years the question of "why it is so hard to develop corporate social responsibility issues in the case company?" has been bothering in the background almost constantly. Even though it is difficult to answer this question comprehensively, it has at least become clear that there are almost as many interpretations for the concept of corporate social responsibility as there are people interpreting it. This ambiguity related to the phenomenon in question seems to be one factor making it significantly harder for corporate social responsibility to develop in companies.

Investors have significant power in companies and often also great interest in companies' operations. Among them a phenomenon called socially responsible investment has been developing for a long time, just like corporate social responsibility has in companies. For companies this has basically meant a rising interest from the side of investors towards companies' corporate social responsibility activities. But as corporate social responsibility is understood in many ways, there is also confusion on the investors' way of understanding the issue. For many, it is unclear why investors are interested of companies' corporate social responsibility activities and what they are actually interested about in detail.

This confusion in companies on both the concept of corporate social responsibility and the investors' way of understanding it makes the life harder for the investors, companies' investor relations personnel and many more, working close by. More concretely it makes it harder for the investors to get the information they would like to get from companies and slows down the overall development process of companies in the field of corporate social responsibility.

Given these challenges, this master's thesis tries to shed light on the investors' and the case company's middle managers' understandings of corporate social responsibility and reflect on the reasons behind these understandings. This way it tries to contribute to the hopefully growing understanding of the phenomenon in question and thus support the investors, investor relations personnel and corporate social responsibility personnel in their daily tasks.

The results of this study show that there is a contradiction in the ways the interviewed investors and case company's middle managers understand the concept of corporate social responsibility. This contradiction is present especially in the motives of these two groups for taking corporate social responsibility into account in their daily work. However, even though the motives are partly different, the actual outcomes of corporate social responsibility work might be very similar from both viewpoints.

1.2 Research problems and objectives of the study

This master's thesis has two objectives of which the first one aims to serve the wider community and the second one the case company studied in this thesis. The objectives are presented below.

- The wider objective is to increase comprehension of the existence of different understandings of corporate social responsibility and the consequences of this.
- The narrower objective is to support the case company in developing the corporate social responsibility of its operations and its ways of serving its owners regarding corporate social responsibility.

Based on the objectives of this thesis, the following research questions can be expressed:

- What kinds of understandings of corporate social responsibility exist?
 - How do selected investors and case company's middle managers understand the concept of corporate social responsibility?
- What kinds of consequences do these understandings have on the development of corporate social responsibility in the case company?

The whole study is about people having different understandings of the concept of corporate social responsibility. Thus the concept "understanding of corporate social responsibility" is crucial for this study. It refers to the subjective ways the case company's middle managers and interviewed investors construct the meaning and contents of corporate social responsibility, in other words their subjective understandings of it.

In this study "an understanding of corporate social responsibility" includes three different aspects. First of all it includes the motives different actors have for corporate social responsibility: why is corporate social responsibility important? Secondly it contains the concrete manifestation of corporate social responsibility in the everyday life: what are the concrete actions related to corporate social responsibility? Finally related to both of these two are the expectations of the different actors on the

consequences of corporate social responsibility: what does corporate social responsibility lead to? All these different aspects are dealt throughout this study.

The whole thesis has been constructed on the basis of the objectives and research questions. The thesis begins with a theoretical review of previous research on the subject, which partly gives answers to the research questions. This is followed by an empirical case study, which studies these questions in the context of a case company and its owners. The empirical data used in this study is theme interviews of the case company's middle managers and investment institution representatives. Reflections are presented based on the theoretical and empirical data and finally a summary of the answers to the research questions is present in the end of this thesis, in Chapter 5 Reflections and conclusions.

1.3 Research methodology

In this chapter the research methodology is presented by following the so called research “onion” of Saunders et al. (2009). The methodological choices are presented layer by layer from research philosophy until research design. Data collection and data analysis methods are presented later on, in the empirical part of this study.

1.3.1 Research onion

Saunders et al. (2009) have presented research methodologies in the form of an onion (Figure 1). The metaphor of an onion suits well in this context, as the research methodologies and their choices can be approached from the perspective of increasingly diminishing scope. The outermost circle of the research onion is about research philosophies, which Saunders et al. (2009) have divided into positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism. The philosophical approach to research is the widest scope of all and affects all the other methodological choices made.

The philosophical perspective is followed by two different approaches to research: deductive and inductive. (Saunders et al. 2009) The basic foundation for the research is set through these two: research philosophy and approach. These are followed by the actual research design. Regarding the research design, firstly there are different research strategies to choose from, which according to Saunders et al. (2009) are experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research.

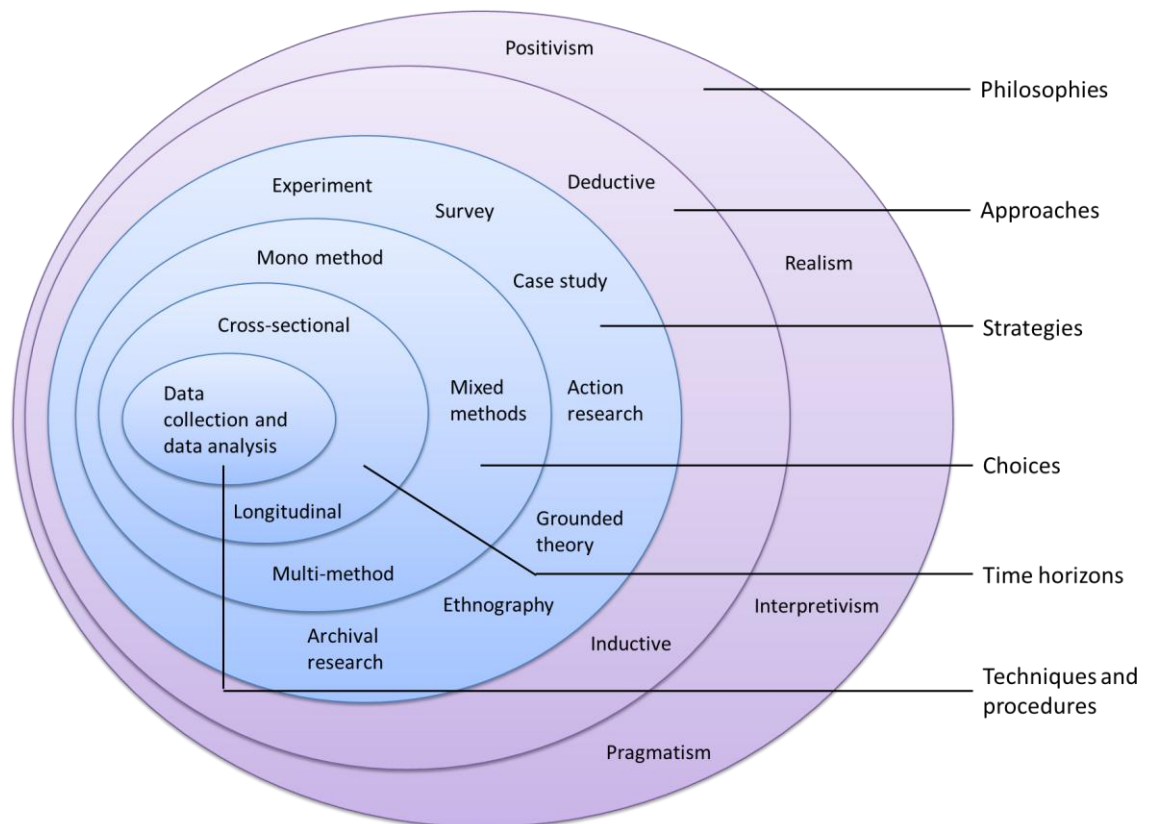


Figure 1 The research 'onion', adapted from Saunders et al. 2009

After the choice of a research strategy, it is time to make choices of the research methods of the study. Choices should be made whether to use quantitative or qualitative data, or both. Also data sources are to be chosen, as well as whether to use just one or several data sources. These research method choices are followed by the decision of the time horizon of the study: does it concentrate on a single moment or is it longitudinal.

Finally, in the center of the research onion is choices related to the data collection and data analysis (Figure 1).

1.3.2 Research philosophy

The different research philosophies can mainly be compared in two different ways, them being the different philosophical views on ontology and epistemology. Of these ontology refers to different views on the nature of reality and being: is reality something which exists separately from the social actors of that context, or are the social actors actually creating the reality and thus act as inseparable parts of it? On the other hand epistemology is about acceptable knowledge for a certain researcher. Measurable objects, middle managers' personal feelings, statistical data, narratives... Which of the different data sources and types are seen as reliable and acceptable for making research? (Saunders et al. 2009)

Saunders et al. (2009) distinguish four different philosophical approaches to ontology and epistemology. These are positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism. However, these are not totally separate ways of approaching research and form rather a continuum of changing viewpoints than clearly distinct philosophies. This thesis most closely represents the philosophical viewpoint of *interpretivism*.

Ontologically interpretivism has a socially constructed approach (Saunders et al. 2009). What social constructivism means, is basically that the world we are living in is constructed through the interaction of different people, values, interpretations and so on. There is no one truth, but the truth is dependent on the context and belief systems around. Each person living in this world has kind of his or her own reality, which is true for him or her and is shaped by the specific context around. Thus, there are multiple truths which are socially constructed. (Healy & Perry 2000) Epistemologically the interpretivist viewpoint sees that people's subjective viewpoints and meanings they give

for different issues, as well as the social context around these are worth investigating (Saunders et al. 2009).

The choices behind the research questions of this thesis represent strongly an interpretivist viewpoint on research and the world. The basic assumption behind this thesis is that the concept of corporate social responsibility does not mean something that could be seen as a fact, but the meaning of the concept is very strongly socially constructed. This thesis tries to understand the different ways that people in different organizations understand the concept of corporate social responsibility, what the context is which leads to the different kinds of understandings and what consequences these different interpretations have. This is a strongly interpretivist approach to research.

1.3.3 Research approach

There are mainly two different research approaches: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach is about making a hypotheses based on existing theory and testing that hypotheses in the empirical data. Inductive, on the other hand, starts from the empirical data and tries to form an understanding and new theory based on the empirical evidence. Deductive and inductive approaches can also be referred to as top-down and bottom-up. (Saunders et al. 2009)

The research approaches are fairly closely connected to certain research philosophies so that the deductive approach is often combined with positivist research philosophy and the inductive approach with interpretivism. Also the collected data differ: deductive research uses often quantitative data in fairly large quantities so that generalizations can be made, whereas inductive research uses qualitative data and concentrates on the social context and meanings much more. (Saunders et al. 2009)

This study's research approach is *inductive*. The inductive approach is consistent with the interpretivist research philosophy applied in this research and overall it suites the

nature of this research better compared to the deductive approach. The main idea in this study is to truly comprehend what the different understandings of corporate social responsibility are by investigating the empirical data, instead of testing whether the different understandings fit to a certain theoretical framework.

The meaning of corporate social responsibility has been debated for decades and thus it is worth looking at the everyday meanings given for it in the real life and in real organizational contexts. After all, people in organizations act every day based on their current understanding of the issue. Theoretical background is presented in this thesis, but it is to give some background understanding and also possible explanations for the findings found from the empirical data.

1.3.4 Research strategy

The research strategy is the first part of the actual research design (Saunders et al. 2009). The research strategy of this study is a *case study*. Case study is a research strategy which concentrates on one single empirical setting and tries to understand the context and dynamics of that setting. There can be one case or multiply cases in one research. (Eisenhardt 1989)

Yin (2003) compares different research strategies and concludes that case study is a suitable research strategy when the research questions are in the form of “how?” or “why?” and thus have an explanatory nature, connecting the researched phenomenon closely to the context surrounding it. Case study is also suitable when researching contemporary events and may involve direct observation as well as interviews of persons involved in the events under research. Beside these, case study can cover other sources of evidence, such as documents and artifacts, in order to form a comprehensive picture of the setting. (Yin 2003)

Eriksson and Koistinen (2005) present four criteria when case study is a suitable research strategy to use. The first criteria is that the questions of “what?”, “how?” and “why?” are central for the research. Secondly the researcher has little control over the events taking place, thirdly there exist fairly little empirical research on the subject and finally the research target is a phenomenon taking currently place in the real life. Both Yin (2003) and Eriksson and Koistinen (2005) state however, that it is challenging to define the actual case being researched and its boundaries.

The case study research strategy was chosen for this study especially because the research interest was towards a single contextual setting. As explained in Chapter 1.1, one wider question behind this research could be formulated as “why it is so hard to develop corporate social responsibility issues in the case company?” and a part of the answer to this question seems to be in the ways people understand the concept of corporate social responsibility. Additionally, even though the researcher works in the case company, still a lack of control strongly characterizes the events taking place. It also seems that the different understandings of the concept of corporate social responsibility and their effects on the real life have been researched fairly little. Thus, the case study research strategy supports in creating a rich understanding of the case in question.

1.3.5 Research choices

After choosing the research strategy, next choice to make is about the empirical data and its type. Research can be divided into mono-method, multi-method and mixed-method research. The difference between these is the range of empirical data used. In mono-method research only quantitative or qualitative data is used and the data is collected in one single way, for example a survey or interviews. In multi-method research the methods used are either quantitative or qualitative, but the data is collected in several ways. Finally in mixed-method research both quantitative and qualitative data are used. (Saunders et al. 2009)

This study is a *mono-method research*. Only qualitative data is used in this study and the data is collected only through interviews. However, some background knowledge is based on the experiences of the researcher from working in the case company for several years. This method was chosen for this study because the number of interviews used gave already a great amount of fairly rich data regarding the research question and seemed as a sufficient amount of data in order to find interesting viewpoints and conclusions. Besides, there were also practical limitations such as a restricted amount of time, which affected the choice.

Regarding the time horizon the research could be either cross-sectional or longitudinal (Saunders et al. 2009). In this case the research is cross-sectional because of time restrictions and also the nature of the research question. The corporate social responsibility issues were developed in the company at the very moment when the research was conducted and the current understandings which the investors and case company's middle managers had affected the development work every day. Thus, it was important to understand the situation at this cross-sectional moment. However, it would also be interesting to conduct longitudinal research on similar theme and see how the understandings of corporate social responsibility develop over time.

2 Theoretical background

This part of the study presents theoretical background for the research subject. The theories reviewed are selected so that they would increase the comprehension of the existence of different understandings of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). First the development of CSR over time is looked at. Secondly two different classifications of CSR and related theories are presented. Thirdly the investor's way of understanding CSR is presented through explaining a phenomenon called socially responsible investment. Finally different investors' motives for socially responsible investment are reviewed. In the end of this part, a summary of the theoretical viewpoints presented is given and some conclusions are made.

2.1 Development of CSR over time

In the 1960s and 1970s corporate social responsibility was practically seen as a joke (Lydenberg 2005) and also the famous words of Milton Friedman date from that era. In his book called *Capitalism and Freedom*, Friedman states the following:

“The view has been gaining widespread acceptance that corporate officials and labor leaders have a ‘social responsibility’ that goes beyond serving the interest of their stockholders or their members. This view shows a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy. In such an economy, there is one and only one social responsibility of business to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud. ... Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible.” (Friedman 1962, page 112)

The quote above is often used, even today, when arguing against corporate social responsibility. However, already in the end of 1990s when looking through the annual reports of Fortune 500 companies, almost 90% of them stated corporate social responsibility to have an essential role in their organizational goals (Lee 2008). Since then, the role of corporate social responsibility has only grown (Lydenberg 2005). How and why has this happened? How did CSR develop from a joke to the mainstream? Some of the answer to these questions can be found from the changes in the concept of CSR itself during the past decades.

The business community has had concerns for society for centuries (Carroll 1999). For example in Finland in the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century there was a period when industrial companies strongly participated in the building of the whole society. This participation was mostly driven by the concern of sustaining the

company's employees' ability to work and to increase the commitment of the employees and their families towards the employer. (Juutinen & Steiner 2010) However, this kind of social responsibility and participation in society by companies is often separated from the modern development of corporate social responsibility.

Several authors see the modern era of corporate social responsibility to begin from the launch of Howard Bowen's book called "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" in 1953 (Carroll 1979; Preston 1975; Wartick & Cochran 1985). Bowen (1953) defined the social responsibilities of the businessman as follows: "*It refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society*" (page 6). Notable here is that Bowen does not question whether businessmen have social responsibilities, but is certain of it and uses the word *obligation* in the definition. This is because he saw that business had great power and influence in society and that the decisions made by businessmen affected society on a large scale. This power relation, according to his opinion, leads automatically to the obligation of working for the benefit of society.

In the 1960s the amount of literature regarding CSR began to expand significantly. Many writers tried to define CSR and proposed their own definitions, describing slightly different content factors for the concept. One of the most influential writers in the field of CSR at the time was Keith Davis. (Carroll 1999) In his article in 1960 Davis defines businessmen's social responsibility in the following way: "*businessmen's decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest.*" Davis saw that the social responsibility could be divided into two different approaches. The first one was about supporting public welfare in an economic way through the management of an economic unit in a certain societal context. The second approach he saw to be a responsibility to "*nurture and develop human values (such as morale, cooperation, motivation, and self-realization in work.)*" which he saw could not be economically measured. (Davis 1960) Thus, according to Davis the social

responsibility of business is about issues separate from the direct economic interest of the company.

Other aspects of social responsibility were presented in the 1960s by for example Joseph W. McGuire in his definition (1963, cited from Carroll 1999): “*The idea of social responsibilities supposes that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond these obligations*” and continuing more precisely that “*the corporation must take an interest in politics, in the welfare of the community, in education, in the ‘happiness’ of its employees, and, in the whole social world about it. Therefore, business must act ‘justly’, as a proper citizen should.*” This definition and discussion raises points such as the existence of requirements extending beyond legal obligations, points regarding ethical aspects of business and the citizenship of business in society.

The USA of the 1960s was in fact in many ways a fruitful environment for thoughts of social responsibility of business to develop. The wider public was prejudiced and had a negative attitude towards corporations, which for example encouraged CEOs to talk about corporate social responsibility in their public statements. However, CSR was mostly related to the public relations strategy of companies and gained no deeper commitment for the corporate social responsibility issues inside companies’ organizations. Rather, by many mid-level managers it was seen to affect the profit of the company in a negative way. (Lee 2008)

In the beginning of 1970s there were two clearly distinct viewpoints on corporations and their responsibilities towards society. Some people saw that companies had wide responsibilities and obligations towards society, whereas others thought that the discussion of social responsibilities of business was strongly against the basic idea and meaning of corporations. In the beginning of the 1970s there started to be first attempts to unify these two viewpoints and to find a common ground for them. (Lee 2008)

The Committee for Economic Development published in 1970 a publication called “A New Rationale for Corporate Social Policy”. The publication consisted of three articles, of which the third one (Wallish & McGovan 1970) presents extensive argumentation on the unification of shareholders’ interests and socially responsible activities of companies. The argumentation is based on the idea that there exist social activities conducted by companies which do not return the benefits to the company which invested in these activities on a comparable scale compared to the social benefits gained. But if the companies of a certain society are taken as a whole, the benefits are collected by all the companies together. This way, as most of the shareholders have diversified stock portfolios, also the social benefits gained as a result of social activities of companies will support their interests through the benefit of the company collective as a whole. (Wallish & McGovan 1970)

During the 1970s the viewpoint that companies’ social activities are beneficial for shareholders in the long-term by strengthening the society in which the companies belong to became widely used in research. Also the focus of research concentrated more on the content of CSR and its implementation processes which would support this rationale of mutual social and shareholder benefits, instead of concentrating on the discussion of whether socially responsible activities should overall be conducted or not. (Lee 2008)

The 1980s was mostly characterized in the literature by the presentation of different kinds of models putting the different aspects of CSR together, or then going deeper into certain aspects of CSR and for example connecting CSR with different organizational theories (Carroll 1999). One of the most influential writers in the 1980s in this field was Archie B. Carroll, who published his three-dimensional model of the contents of corporate social performance in 1979. This model was developed further by several different authors and Carroll himself as well. (Lee 2008)

In 1983 Carroll presented his definition of CSR at that time, which goes as follows: “*In my view, CSR involves the conduct of a business so that it is economically profitable, law abiding, ethical and socially supportive. To be socially responsible, in my view, then means that profitability and obedience to the law are foremost conditions to discussing the firm’s ethics and the extent to which it supports the society in which it exists with contributions of money, time and talent. Thus, CSR is composed of four parts: economic, legal, ethical and voluntary or philanthropic.*” (Carroll 1983, p. 604) This definition clearly distinguishes different parts of CSR and concentrates on the organization’s internal perspective more than any other theory or significant academic article before this one.

The coupling of the shareholders’ financial viewpoint and the social responsibility of business was also clearly visible in Peter Drucker’s definition from the year 1984. He discussed the meaning of the social responsibility of business in the following way: “*But the proper ‘social responsibility’ of business is to tame the dragon, that is to turn a social problem into economic opportunity and economic benefit, into productive capacity, into human competence, into well-paid jobs, and into wealth*” (Drucker 1984, p. 62). Thus, during the 1980s there were more and more attempts to bring the interests of shareholders and other stakeholders together, for the benefit of both.

Towards the end of the 20th century at least two major changes were taking place in the CSR literature and discussions. First the stakeholder theory had been developing quite recently and in the middle of the 1990s it was connected to the theory of CSR. Partly because of this, as the stakeholder theory helped in making CSR more concrete for companies, also concrete measures of CSR were increasingly developed. In fact from there on, the stakeholder theory began to gradually move towards the core of CSR. (Lee 2008)

An example of the 1990s approach towards CSR and stakeholder theory is Clarkson’s article from the year 1995. In his article Clarkson draws conclusions from an extensive

research program concentrating on corporate social performance and stakeholder theory. He for example presents typical stakeholder issues companies must face with certain stakeholder groups. These include occupational health and safety, women in management and on the board and health promotion as examples of the relation with employees. In the relation with customers issues such as product safety and customer communication would need to be paid attention. What comes to public stakeholders, issues such as conservation of energy and materials and social investment and donations are mentioned. (Clarkson 1995)

Clarkson (1995) also divided stakeholders in two distinct groups: primary and secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders are typically shareholders, employees, customers and suppliers, as well as the government and communities, forming the public stakeholder group. These primary stakeholders are very important for the company and its survival and if one of these groups is clearly dissatisfied on the company and its actions, it may have disastrous effects on the company's survival. On the other hand secondary stakeholders are stakeholders which are in interaction with the company, but aren't as crucial for the company as the primary stakeholders. (Clarkson 1995) This kind of distinction and classification of stakeholders became later on very popular when discussing a company's CSR activities.

During the first decade of the 21st century the viewpoint on CSR was increasingly strategic and a distinction between the social and economic performance of a company was at least disappearing, if not already disappeared. In fact it was seen that a company's performance in CSR had great implications on the company's financial performance. (Lee 2008) For example Porter and Kramer (2006) presented in their article called "Strategy and Society" a distinction of responsive CSR and strategic CSR, indicating that when CSR is approached in the right way, it can be seen as a very strategic issue for the company in question.

Based on this review of the development of CSR and the discussion around it during the past decades it can be said that it has strongly developed and changed its focus as time has gone by. Lee (2008) has presented a summary of the changes in the trends in CSR research (Figure 2) from the 50s and 60s to 90s. He has identified four main areas where changes have taken place, these being the level of analysis, theoretical orientation, ethical orientation and relationship between CSR and corporate financial performance (CFP). (Lee 2008)

From the 50s and 60s to 90s the level of analysis has changed from the clear macro-social concentration of the 50s and 60s to a concentration on the organizational level in the 90s. The theoretical orientation has changed from an ethical and compulsory viewpoint towards a managerial viewpoint and the ethical orientation has switched from explicit to implicit. Finally CSR and corporate financial performance have gradually approached each other so that in the 90s they became tightly connected. (Lee 2008)

	50s & 60s		90s
Level of Analysis	Macro-social	→	Organizational
Theoretical Orientation	Ethical/ Obligation	→	Managerial
Ethical Orientation	Explicit	→	Implicit
Relationship between CSR & CFP	Exclusive/No discussion	→	Tight coupling

Figure 2 Trends in CSR research. Adapted from Lee, 2008.

Lee (2008) presented also another summary of the development of CSR thinking (Table 1). In this table it is shown how the dominant theme of the discussion evolved decade after decade, beginning from the social obligations of business and ending up in the stakeholder approach and strategic management. The coupling with corporate financial performance has gradually increased, just as the level of uncertainty related to CSR has gradually decreased. Also the motivation for CSR has changed significantly during the years from external control to competitive advantage. (Lee 2008)

Table 1 Theoretical trends in CSR thinking. Adapted from Lee, 2008.

	Dominant theme	Coupling with CFP	Motivation	Level of uncertainty with CSR
1950s and 1960s	Ethics and social obligation of businesses	No coupling	Corporate externality control	Very high
1970s	Enlightened self-interest	Loose coupling	Reconciliation of two opposing sides of the debate	High
1980s	Corporate social performance model	Tighter, but still somewhat loose coupling	Pragmatic and comprehensive model construction	Medium
1990s	Stakeholder approach and strategic management	Tight coupling	Practicality (empirical testing and implementation) and competitive advantage	Low

Based on this historical review it is easy to say that the meaning of the concept “corporate social responsibility” has dramatically changed from the 1950s to 1990s. The quote presented by Milton Friedman in the beginning of this chapter may have been appropriate when considering the meanings that were given for CSR in the 1960s. However, since then the meaning of CSR has significantly approached the ideas of a company’s competitive advantage, strategic management and has been closely coupled with company’s financial performance. At the same time the approaches of ethical and social obligations have practically disappeared from the discussion. It seems now that the current understanding of CSR is actually very close to the thoughts of Milton Friedman from the 1960s. After all, CSR discussions are currently concentrating significantly on creating value for shareholders.

2.2 Classifications of CSR

Besides the historical development of the concept of corporate social responsibility and its meaning, CSR can be approached by classifying different types of CSR. There exist

different classifications of the different types of CSR in the academic literature, but many of them have similar characteristics. One way of classifying views of CSR into different types has been presented by Lantos (2001) and another classification is presented by Garriga & Melé (2004). These two classifications are especially clear and suitable for this study. They will be looked at more carefully in this chapter.

2.2.1 Ethical, altruistic and strategic CSR

Lantos (2001) identifies three different types of CSR which are ethical CSR, altruistic CSR and strategic CSR. These three types of CSR are mutually exclusive and are different regarding two aspects. Firstly whether CSR is optional or obligatory, thus referring to the nature of CSR and secondly whether CSR is for stakeholders' good or for company's good or both, referring to the purpose of CSR. (Lantos 2001)

The basic idea behind ethical CSR is that companies have moral obligations towards their stakeholders, these moral obligations being mandatory in nature. The companies may cause negative effects on their stakeholders and it is seen to be their duty to prevent this damage from happening, or correcting the harm they have caused. As this is a moral duty, it must be followed also in case it is for the harm of the company itself. (Lantos 2001)

Ethical CSR also includes that the company employees have moral responsibilities regarding their occupational roles. This means that certain duties or certain kind of behavior is expected from people working in certain roles, and it is their duty to follow these social assumptions attached to those roles. Ethical CSR could be summarized in the idea of "do no harm". In short a company is seen as a social actor in society, which has moral obligations. (Lantos 2001)

The second viewpoint, altruistic CSR, could be also named as humanitarian CSR. This viewpoint on CSR is mostly about making good for society, in a fairly voluntary way.

According to altruistic CSR companies should try to solve social problems such as poverty, crime or illiteracy, even if it would cause harm for the company itself. Altruistic CSR is about genuine care of society, making world a better place. The thinking behind is that as companies have the resources and capabilities to do social good, they should also use these possibilities. In practice this thinking of altruistic CSR has been manifested for example through charitable donations and community service programs by companies. (Lantos 2001) But as Lantos (2001) explains, the arguments for altruistic CSR are very weak and altruistic CSR has been widely criticized. Most of the good arguments presented for altruistic CSR actually end up justifying either ethical or strategic CSR.

The third viewpoint, strategic CSR, is about creating a win-win situation for the company and society. The motivation behind strategic CSR is the benefit of company, which is achieved through providing benefit for society. Sometimes companies' socially responsible and ethical actions may be harmful for them in the short term, but beneficial in the long term. Also for example charitable donations can be a form of strategic CSR, when they are seen to benefit the company in some way, such as better reputation or customer loyalty. (Lantos 2001) This viewpoint has been increasing in popularity according Lantos (2001) and is also expected to continue increasing its popularity.

2.2.2 Instrumental, political, integrative, and ethical theories

Garriga and Melé (2004) had also noticed that CSR means significantly different things for different people, especially regarding the relationships between business and society. When classifying the approaches and theories related to CSR, they tested whether the theories and approaches could be classified under four different themes: instrumental theories, political theories, integrative theories, and ethical theories. Garriga and Melé (2004) concluded that this kind of classification is possible. The classification is explained in the following.

The first group of theories was called instrumental theories. According to these instrumental theories business' only meaning is to be an instrument for creating wealth. In this approach possible CSR activities are purely strategic tools for advancing economic objectives and thus wealth. For example Friedman (1962) represented this approach with his statements related to shareholder value creation. From this viewpoint the studies investigating the relation between CSR and companies' financial performance are especially relevant. (Garriga & Melé 2004)

Garriga and Melé (2004) recognize three groups of theories belonging under the instrumental theories. There are theories related to the maximization of shareholder value, strategies for achieving competitive advantages and cause-related marketing. The consequence of the shareholder value maximization -theories regarding CSR is that the selection of social activities is done purely based on economic criteria. If CSR activities add shareholder value they should be executed and if not, they should be rejected. Social and ethical issues can also form competitive advantages, thus contributing for increased wealth creation. Also the advancement of social and ethical issues coupled with the buying of a certain company's products may increase profits, which is the case of cause-related marketing. (Garriga & Melé 2004)

The second group of theories, so called political theories, covers theories which mostly deal with the interactions and connections of business and society. They recognize the big power that companies have in society and assume that companies use this power in a responsible way. It is seen that this power relation leads companies to engage in certain social activities. Two main theories under this approach are corporate constitutionalism and corporate citizenship. (Garriga & Melé 2004)

Corporate constitutionalism is represented by Davis (1960) who was one of the first to concentrate on businesses' power in society (Garriga & Melé 2004). Davis (1960) saw that companies and businessmen are given social power outside of the borders of the company because of their important roles regarding society, because of the intelligence

of businessmen and so on. But this power comes with responsibilities, and the amount of power should be balanced with the amount of responsibility. Thus, Davis states that if a company or businessman has social power, he must also present social responsibility in equal amounts. If social responsibility is avoided, then gradually the company or businessman will lose his social power as well, as some other actor is willing to carry the social responsibility attached with the social power. (Davis 1960)

Another main theory stream under the political theories is corporate citizenship. Corporate citizenship has gained popularity at the same time as globalization has increased, as a force of eroding local citizenship of individuals, and as some companies have gained social and economic power larger than that of some governments. Basically corporate citizenship theories point out business' need to be concerned about the local community, and increasingly also about the global community. (Garriga & Melé 2004)

But also corporate citizenship can be understood in many ways. For example Matten et al. (2003) have presented three understandings of the concept of corporate citizenship. First of them is very close to philanthropy and recognizing some responsibilities for the local community, and the second one is that corporate citizenship is defined very similarly to the concept of CSR. These two viewpoints give very little added value into the general academic discussion related to the relationships between business and society.

The third view, presented by Matten et al. (2003) themselves, is about companies involuntarily needing to step up for the protection of citizenship as governments are losing their ability to offer civil rights for citizens because of globalization and increasing interaction across national borders. In practice this may mean that companies take on tasks that would otherwise be the responsibilities of governments, but in which governments have failed or are unable to take on the responsibility. (Matten et al. 2003)

Third group of theories according to Garriga & Melé (2004) are integrative theories. The integrative theories are based on the idea that business is dependent on the social context around it for its acceptance, success and growth. Because of this, business should consider social demands and values which are dependent on time and location and are thus different for different companies. Business should integrate these social values expected from them, in other words act according to the social values relevant for their time and location, for them to succeed. Many of the theories included in the group of integrative theories are concentrated on how to identify the social values and how to respond to them. (Garriga & Melé 2004)

In the 70s discussions were initiated about themes called social responsiveness and issues management, belonging to the group of integrative theories. For example Ackerman (1973) identified a dilemma facing corporations in the United States: the corporations should have increasingly taken social demands into account and at the same time for example technological and economic development and diversification made it harder for companies to respond to these social demands. In his article Ackerman identifies and develops a responsiveness process on how a company manages the social demands it faces.

Before discussing the process itself, Ackerman (1973) also identifies what the social demands are that companies should respond to. According to him there is a “zone of discretion” between issues which are strongly regulated and sanctioned by the society, and issues which have not yet received enough attention for them to be considered in any official way, but which raise interest in the general public. The environment around the company gives unclear signals related to social issues in this zone of discretion, their popularity and the responses expected from the company. The company has to respond somehow to these social issues, but it is unclear what kind of response is sufficient, which makes the process of social responsiveness a difficult one. (Ackerman 1973)

Also Jones (1980) emphasizes the importance of the process of business trying to take social issues into account, instead of the actual outcomes achieved. He states that corporations should be judged according to their attempts of taking into consideration and minimizing the social costs of their decision beforehand instead of the final decisions themselves. For Jones corporate social responsibility is about taking social issues into consideration in decision making processes of business. Johnson (1983) defined issues management as follows: “...*issues management is the process by which the corporation can identify, evaluate and respond to those social and political issues which may impact significantly upon it.*” Johnson (1983) explains how effective issues management helps in anticipating the social issues affecting the company and acting accordingly before problems occur.

Another theory stream under the group of integrative theories is stakeholder management. Also the stakeholder management approach is about listening to the opinions and viewpoints outside the company itself and taking them into consideration in the business processes and decisions. However, now the “environment” is more specifically defined to be the stakeholders who are somehow affected by or attached to the company and its operations. The academic discussion related to stakeholder management deals for example with managing the corporate stakeholder relations and balancing the conflicting viewpoints of the different stakeholder groups. (Garriga & Melé 2004)

The fourth and final group of theories identified by Garriga and Melé (2004) is ethical theories. The ethical theories concentrate on ethical requirements in the relationship between business and society. By ethical requirements ideas such as “the right thing to do” and requirements for achieving a good society are referred to. Four different theory streams are seen to belong to the ethical theories. These are normative stakeholder theory, universal rights, sustainable development and the common good approach. (Garriga & Melé 2004) Of these, the universal rights and the common good approach are looked at more closely.

The theory stream of universal rights is mostly about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Garriga & Melé 2004). Cassel (2001) points out that if human rights are to be followed in the world governments cannot follow them on their own, but need corporations to obey them as well. This is the case especially now as there are increasingly global companies bigger than many nation states. Either corporations would need to obey the human rights voluntarily or do it through government regulations on business. Cassel discusses the development of capitalism after the Cold War, but in general the conclusion seems to be: companies following human rights would be the right thing to do – or do not companies and the global economy exist for the well-being of people? (Cassel 2001)

According to the common good approach any social group or individual person should be contributing to the common good of society, because they are part of society. This same goes for corporations (Garriga & Melé 2004). Fort (1996, 1999) describes corporations as mediating institutions, the concept referring to fairly small communities which socialize individuals. These mediating institutions used to be family, church and similar institutions, but due to several reasons, for example because people spend so much time at work, companies should also be seen as mediating institutions and having responsibilities especially towards their employees. (Fort 1996, 1999)

For a company to be a meditating institution means that it supports individual development and their “authentic needs” on a large scale. Corporations and their subunits should enable their employees to form a sense of identity, to offer a feeling of connectedness with others, help them to see the consequences of their actions and thus teach them moral norms and so on, thus contributing for the common good of individuals and society. (Fort 1996, 1999)

All in all Garriga and Melé (2004) conclude that it is possible to classify the main theories and approaches related to CSR into four groups. Of these groups the

instrumental theories focus on meeting objectives that generate long-term profits, political theories on the responsible ways of using business power, integrative theories on integrating social demands into business operations and ethical theories on doing what is ethically correct and this way contributing to a good society.

2.3 The basics of socially responsible investment

Now we turn to look at the problem of companies' social activities from investors' point of view. A phenomenon called socially responsible investment (SRI) has been increasing its popularity among investors fairly steadily during recent years. The meaning of SRI is under debate, just as the meaning of CSR. But in short it could be said that socially responsible investment means that environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues of the investments' operations are taken into account in the investment process and investment selection. First some basic issues for understanding the phenomenon of socially responsible investment are presented. In the next chapter the motives of different investors to invest in a socially responsible way are reviewed more closely.

Before the concept of SRI, a concept of ethical investment was used. These two concepts are still used interchangeably in some contexts, but also different meanings have been given to ethical and socially responsible investment. Often it is said that ethical investment was a concept mostly used by churches and similar institutions which have a solid value base and which are able and willing to apply these values also to their investment operations. In this context the concept of ethical investment often meant the exclusion of certain industries from the investment portfolio, so that the values of the investor, for example a church, would be met. These excluded industries were for example alcohol, tobacco, gambling and weapons. In these cases ethical investment might have resulted into lower investment returns compared to normal investments. (Hyske et al. 2012; Sparkes & Cowton 2004)

Instead, socially responsible investment has developed further from the ideas of ethical investment and is currently mostly guided by the improvement of the risk-return profile of the investment portfolio by taking environmental, social and governance issues into account. This approach, which concentrates on better financial returns, is much more suitable for investors such as investment banks and pension funds, which invest the money of a huge range of clients, representing also a huge range of different values. (Hyske et al. 2012; Sparkes & Cowton 2004)

The development of socially responsible investment could be seen to have several milestones in its history. However, clearly one of the most influential milestones was the launch of United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). The principles were launched in 2006 and since then have become hugely popular. The amount of signatory organizations has steadily grown, so that in April 2013 there was almost 1200 signatories from around the world, representing around US\$ 34 trillion in investments. (PRI 2013a) The Principles for Responsible Investment set a widely accepted, concrete baseline for responsible investment all over the world, basically describing what socially responsible investment means in practice.

The six principles of responsible investing, presented by PRI are listed below (PRI 2013b):

1. We will incorporate ESG issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes.
2. We will be active owners and incorporate ESG issues into our ownership policies and practices.
3. We will seek appropriate disclosure on ESG issues by the entities in which we invest.
4. We will promote acceptance and implementation of the Principles within the investment industry.
5. We will work together to enhance our effectiveness in implementing the Principles.

6. We will each report on our activities and progress towards implementing the Principles.

Beside these principles of responsible investment, there are several more detailed ways of implementing SRI into the everyday practice of investment operations. Hyske et al. (2012) have identified and described these practical approaches including for example negative screening, positive screening, absolute analysis, indices of socially responsible investment, thematic investment, shareholder engagement processes and an integrated approach to investing. These practical approaches are described in the following.

Positive screening emerged in the beginning of the 21st century, when many investors tried to choose so called “best in class” companies in their portfolios instead of the exclusion of some other companies, which was the traditional approach of ethical investment (Hyske et al. 2012). Thus, in positive screening, only the best companies are included in the investment portfolio. Contrary to that, in negative screening the approach is about excluding companies which are according to some criteria irresponsible. Ethical investment is one aspect of negative screening, but the criteria for exclusion may be a lot wider than the ethical and moral standards of ethical investment. For examples companies may be excluded in negative screening due to their poor performance in environmental protection or labor relations. (Renneboog et al. 2008)

However, both in positive and negative screenings one challenge is that many issues are company-specific and it is challenging to make comparisons between companies even inside one industry, making it hard to distinguish “best in class” or “worst in class” companies in practice. Thus, in a method called absolute analysis every company is analyzed on its own, with the aim of improving investment portfolio’s risk-reward profile. Absolute analysis is often used as an example of the integrated approach to investing. (Hyske et al. 2012)

There are also quite a few indices which mostly select the “best in class” companies in CSR and sustainability. Investors can use these indices as a tool, if they are willing to accept the criteria the index forming organizations have used when forming the indices. Often the indices have, however, minimum requirements for company turnover and liquidity, which leads to the automatic exclusion of all the otherwise very good companies which fall outside these minimum limits. Examples of these indices include for example Dow Jones Sustainability Indices and FTSE4Good-indices. In Finland a similar index is OMX GES Finland Sustainability Index. (Hyske et al. 2012)

Another method is thematic investments in which only companies’ products and services are taken into account and funds are constructed based on this kind of classification. Usually the investment funds based on thematic analysis are concentrated on a certain theme such as climate change, water, renewable energy or other environmental technology. All the companies chosen for a certain fund represent the chosen theme. (Hyske et al. 2012)

Shareholder engagement process refers to a dialogue between a company and one of its shareholders or potential shareholders, during which the shareholder aims to change some issues in the company’s operations. The most common motivation to start the engagement process is the shareholder’s desire to improve the company’s long-term profit making potential by affecting on the direction the company is taking or decisions the company is making. The issues dealt during the engagement process may for example be strongly linked to the company’s CSR activities and tackling some risks which have not been sufficiently tackled from the shareholder’s point of view. (Hyske et al. 2012)

Finally the integrated way of approaching socially responsible investing refers to the integration of ESG-issues into the normal investment analysis and investment process, next to the traditional financial measures. It is seen that as the ESG-issues are material for companies, they should also be material for investors when making investment

decisions. By taking the ESG-issues as part of the normal investment process, the amount of information of companies increases and it is possible to do better informed investment decisions based on more comprehensive risk and reward analysis. (Hyske et al. 2012).

2.4 Different investors' motives for socially responsible investment

Different investor groups and their motives for investing in a socially responsible way have gained fairly little interest by academic researchers, especially if comparisons between different investor groups are looked at. However, these subjects have still been studied for example in Sweden by Jansson and Biel (2011a, 2011b) and Nilsson (2008, 2009). In this chapter, the different motives of different kinds of investors for SRI are looked at based on the studies mentioned.

One of the rare comparative studies between different investor groups has been presented by Jansson and Biel (2011b). They executed a questionnaire study related to the motives of different investors for investing in a socially responsible way. For the study they divided investors into three different groups which they named investment institutions, institutional investors and private investors. The investment institutions referred to investors which act based on money from other investors, these including for example pension funds and investment banks. Institutional investors were defined as investor organizations who invest their own money into the stock market. Examples of institutional investors were for example municipalities, non-governmental organizations, companies and labour organizations. Thirdly the private investors referred to private individuals who invest their own money in the stock market or in retail funds. (Jansson & Biel 2011b) This investor classification of Jansson and Biel (2011b) is also used in this study.

The results of the Jansson and Biel's (2011b) study show that the motives for investing in a socially responsible way differ quite significantly between the different investor groups. The motives were investigated by dividing them into two main aspects: the effect of self-transcendent values to the investment decision (values related mostly to environmental, ethical and social issues) and beliefs about the financial benefits of SRI. Regarding the ethical, environmental and social values, they had a fairly large impact on the investment decision of private and institutional investors, whereas fund managers of investment institutions were less motivated to invest in a socially responsible way based on values. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

Regarding financial benefits of SRI the viewpoints were different in different aspects of financial returns. When beliefs about the short-term financial benefits of SRI were asked, all of the three respondent groups thought that in the short-term SRI results in smaller returns than traditional investments. However, when considering long-term returns private investors were still fairly negative about them, whereas institutional investors and investment institutions believed significantly more on higher long-term returns of SRI. Thus, private investors did not believe in better short- or long-term returns and differed in this sense from the other two groups. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

Third measure of financial benefits of SRI was the reduction of financial risk. All the three groups of investors believed that to some extent SRI reduced the financial risk of investments. But this time investment institutions stood out of the three groups, them presenting a much higher belief in the reduction of financial risk compared to the two other investor groups. All in all the investment institutions had most positive attitude towards the financial benefits of SRI, whereas private investors believed least in financial gains. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

The investment institutions had also misguided thoughts about the motives of their clients, who often are private and institutional investors, to invest in a socially responsible way. The investment institutions thought that the financial return is a bigger

motivator than what it actually was and ethical, environmental and social values to be a smaller motivator than in reality. For investment institutions the financial benefits seemed to be the only motivator for SRI, whereas private and institutional investors were more strongly guided by their environmental, social and ethical values. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

Jansson and Biel (2011a) investigated the beliefs of Swedish investment institutions also on a more detailed level and compared the beliefs of investment institutions which invest in a socially responsible way with ones which do not exercise socially responsible investment. In most parts the SRI and non-SRI investment institutions saw the potential benefits of socially responsible investment in similar ways. For example both believed in slightly better long-term financial returns of SRI. However, the SRI investors believed much more strongly on the reduction of financial risk of SRI compared to traditional investments, than did the non-SRI investors. The study concluded that the only motive for large investment institutions to exercise SRI was the potential business case seen in socially responsible investments. Social and environmental values seemed to have practically no role in investment institutions' motives for socially responsible investing. (Jansson & Biel 2011a)

The attitudes and beliefs of private investors were investigated more deeply by Nilsson (2008). Nilsson studied the effect of social, environmental and ethical factors as well as financial perceptions of private investors as influencing factors for them to be investing into SRI mutual funds. The study indicated that private individuals who had higher pro-social attitudes towards the issues dealt among SRI were more likely to invest a larger part of their investment portfolio into SRI mutual funds. The same increased willingness to invest in SRI mutual funds was detected with individuals who believed in consumer effectiveness, referring to the possibility of consumers to affect in the social issues in question through their investment. Thus, the attitudes towards social, environmental and ethical issues strongly affected the investment decisions of private individuals. (Nilsson 2008)

Regarding financial perceptions, Nilsson's study (2008) found out that most of the private investors participating in the study believed that SRI mutual funds provide lower or similar returns compared to conventional mutual funds. What comes to risks, most of the private investors saw that the risks related to SRI mutual funds were similar or somewhat smaller than in conventional mutual funds. But when these were compared with the SRI behavior of these same private investors, it was concluded that the individuals who believed SRI mutual funds to have better returns compared to traditional mutual funds were more likely to invest larger portions of their investment portfolio in SRI mutual funds. Otherwise the financial perceptions did not affect the investment amounts to SRI mutual funds. Finally Nilsson concluded that when private investors invested in SRI mutual funds, they seemed to be motivated by both social, environmental and ethical values as well as the belief of gaining better returns. (Nilsson 2008)

In another study, Nilsson (2009) segmented the private investors who were investing in socially responsible mutual funds. The segmentation was done based on the private investors' perceptions of the importance of financial returns and social responsibility as factors for investing in SRI. Nilsson recognized three clusters which were "primarily concerned about profit", "primarily concerned about social responsibility" and "socially responsible and profit driven". Of these, the cluster concentrating on both social responsibility and profit was the largest one, second largest was the one concentrating only on profit and third was the one concentrating solely on social responsibility. (Nilsson 2009)

The biggest conclusions of Nilsson's study were that first of all the private investors investing in SRI mutual funds are a heterogeneous group with different kinds of motives, including investors who invest in SRI mutual funds purely because they expect better profits from them. On the other hand there also exist a group of individual investors who are more interested of the social responsibility of SRI mutual funds than

their financial performance and should thus be served in very different ways. (Nilsson 2009)

These studies reveal just the results of certain investigated investors and their attitudes. Surely other results can be found and other research methods used for investigating this theme. However, what these presented studies show is that the motives of different investors vary greatly and a whole range of motives from purely financial to purely socially responsible can be found. There exist more unanimous groups of investors, like the investment institutions, which perform their corporate task of providing as good profits as possible for their clients. But behind the investment institutions there seems to be institutional investors and private investors with a much bigger range of motives for socially responsible investing.

2.5 A summary of the theoretical viewpoints presented

In this chapter the theories and existing research which are presented in the previous chapters are shortly drawn together. Regarding the research questions of this thesis, in the first research question it was asked what kinds of understandings of corporate social responsibility exist. The theory presented in this thesis offers some background information and answers for this question.

First half of the theory was about different ways of seeing and understanding the concept of CSR in academic literature and in practice as well. The different viewpoints were presented in two different ways: firstly as a development process over time, mostly during the latter half of 20th century and secondly by classifying different types of CSR. Two classifications were presented, the first one from Lantos (2001) and the second one from Garriga and Melé (2004).

The classification of Lantos (2001) was based on three different ways of understanding CSR, them being named as ethical CSR, altruistic CSR and strategic CSR. On the other

hand, Garriga and Melé (2004) classified the different CSR theories into political, ethical, instrumental and integrative theories. These two classifications and their correspondences are presented in Figure 3, so that the CSR types of Lantos (2001) are on the left and theory groups of Garriga and Melé (2004) on the right. The relationships between these classifications are first looked at.

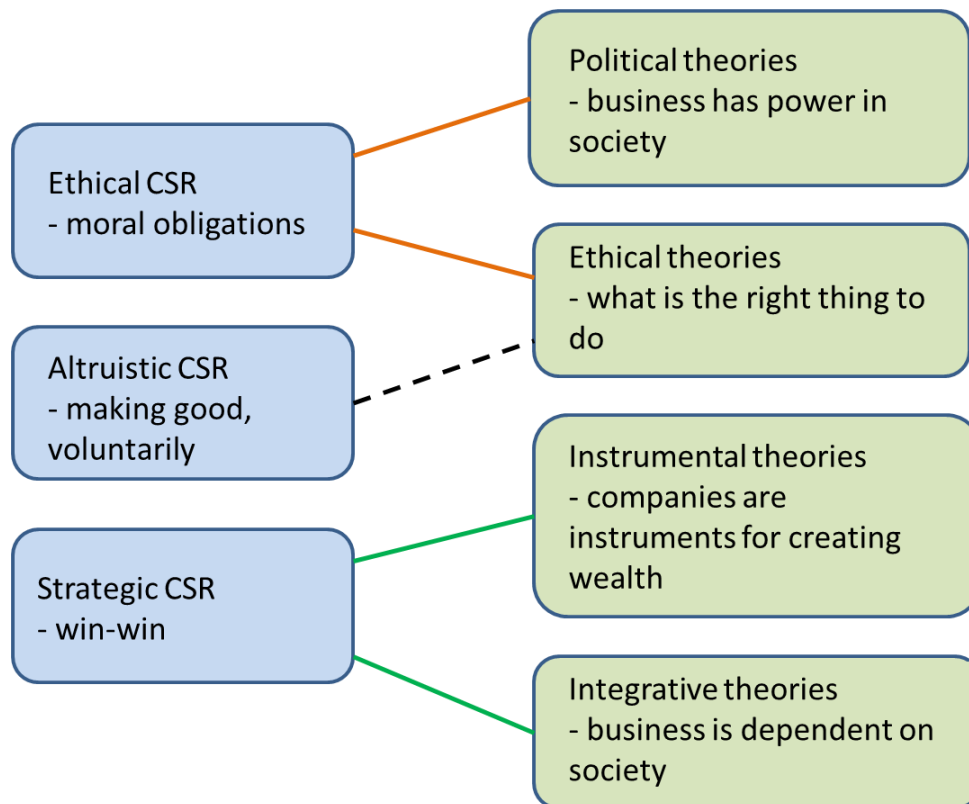


Figure 3 The correspondences in the classifications of Lantos (2001) and Garriga and Melé (2004)

The ethical CSR (Lantos 2001) saw, in short, that companies have moral obligations towards their stakeholders and are obliged to act according to them. This way of thinking seems to correspond quite well with the thinking of political and ethical theories (Garriga & Melé 2004; Figure 3). The political theories stated that business has significant power in society, and because of that power, has also responsibilities or obligations towards society. Ethical theories simply looked at what would be the right thing to do by companies in society. Especially in the political theories there is an

element of companies being obliged to act for the benefit of society because of their power in it, just like in ethical CSR there is the presence of moral obligations.

All of these three classifications approach CSR on a macro-level, through the business-society relations and looks companies as social actors in society. This nature of companies being social actors causes them to also have social responsibilities. These three classifications concentrate mostly to look business and its responsibilities from society's perspective, as well as on the ethical and moral aspects of the business-society relationship. Contrary to this, these approaches do not discuss for example companies' need to succeed financially.

This kind of an approach is characteristic for the 1950s and 1960s. Ethical CSR of Lantos (2001) and political and ethical theories of Garriga and Melé (2004) were most clearly discussed and debated during that period. During these decades an obligations and ethical viewpoints-based view on CSR was most dominant, without any coupling with companies' financial performance (Lee 2008). For example Davis (1960) was one of the most important academics related to both ethical CSR and the political theories.

The second approach is formed by the altruistic CSR (Lantos 2001), which has some similarities with the ethical theories (Garriga and Melé 2004). The altruistic CSR thought that companies should genuinely and voluntarily make good in society. This kind of thinking is partly present in the group of ethical theories, even though the ethical theories are more strongly concentrating on moral obligations than voluntary nature of social action. Still both altruistic CSR and the group of ethical theories concentrate on companies making good for society without clearly stated obligations or reasons behind. All in all altruistic CSR's understanding is that companies' should participate in society in a positive way, based on voluntarism, which is however a fairly rare approach.

The third viewpoint of the CSR types of Lantos (2001) was strategic CSR. Strategic CSR is based on the idea that CSR should be about win-win situations between the

company and society, motivated by the benefit of the company. The theory groups of instrumental theories and integrative theories (Garriga & Melé 2004) correspond with this kind of thinking. The instrumental theories see that companies are purely instruments for creating wealth and if some CSR actions are executed, they should be chosen solely on the basis of the benefit of shareholders. The integrative theories are somewhat softer towards society and see that business is dependent on society and thus it is the benefit of the company to follow and act based on certain expectations of society.

The instrumental and integrative theories as well as the approach of strategic CSR all have similar thinking behind them – before anything else CSR is about getting and forming benefits for the shareholders of the company. In the case of integrative theories and strategic CSR these benefits are gained especially through benefiting society and stakeholders around the company. This way of thinking is looking CSR from the company's perspective and trying to couple the benefits of the company and society. Instead of ethical and moral issues, which were present in the first group of ethical CSR, these classifications concentrate more on the managerial and organizational implications of trying to find a win-win situation between business and society. In these classifications the discussion of a company's financial performance is also very central for the whole approach.

This approach of strategic CSR and instrumental and integrative theories is most characteristic for the 1990s, even though this viewpoint has always existed to some extent. In fact the strategic CSR (Lantos 2001) began to appear in the 1970s and has since then been a more or less discussed viewpoint. The instrumental theories (Garriga & Melé 2004) are on the other hand grounded in Milton Friedman's thoughts during the 1960s, but have been discussed since then, with new theory streams and viewpoints arousing fairly regularly. The integrative theories (Garriga & Melé 2004) most clearly represent the dominant themes of 1980s and 1990s seen by Lee (2008), which are for example the corporate social performance model and stakeholder approach. Also the

win-win approach of strategic CSR was increasing its dominance so that the main viewpoint in the 1990s emphasized a tight coupling with companies' financial performance.

Finally if the investors' way of understanding CSR is looked at and compared to the different types and theory groups of CSR, a fairly clear distinction could be made between ethical investment and socially responsible investment, based on their definitions presented in Chapter 2.3. The viewpoint of ethical investments, which is the older of the two viewpoints, is based on moral and ethical understanding. Thus, if ethical investment is compared to the CSR types of Lantos (2001) it seems to be very close to ethical and altruistic CSR, as well as the ethical theories of Garriga and Melé (2004).

Contrary to the ethical investment, socially responsible investment, as defined in Chapter 2.3, is more purely about the financial benefits and is thus very close to the thoughts of Friedman (1962). The theory group of instrumental theories is best coupled with the definition of socially responsible investment and if looked at the CSR types (Lantos 2001), strategic CSR would be the closest one.

However, as described in Chapter 2.4, different investor groups seem to have very different motives also for investing in a socially responsible way. For investment institutions the motives follow the definition of SRI presented in Chapter 2.3, but instead private and institutional investors had also motives for SRI which were based on their values. In addition, inside for example the group of private investors there were still very different kinds of investors with different kinds of motives. Together these show that investors as one group is a very heterogeneous one and represents several of the classifications of Lantos (2001) and Garriga and Melé (2004). Just like the concept and different understanding of CSR, the investors' understanding and motives for SRI shouldn't be overly simplified.

3 Background of the case study

In this third chapter some background information for the empirical case study is presented. First the case company, the selected investors and their mutual contextual setting is described. Then the objectives for the empirical study are explained. Finally the research process is introduced.

3.1 The case company and selected investors

In this study, a case company was used to study the understandings of its owners and middle managers on corporate social responsibility issues. The middle managers were chosen to represent the internal viewpoint of the case company, because they are in a crucial role in managing the daily business operations. The perceptions of the middle managers strongly affect the way CSR is materialized in the operations of the case company. The top management was not included in the study because the study was executed for the top management and partly designed together with them.

The case company is originally from Finland, even though at the time of the interviews it operated in 14 countries all over Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. It is listed in the Helsinki stock exchange and thus most of its owners have a Finnish background. This geographical context is significant in this study, because the legislation in Finland is probably one of the tightest in the world, together with the Scandinavian countries, and the Finnish society sets tight boundaries for the operations of companies in the country. Thus, if observed from the global perspective, Finnish companies are well managed in areas regarded as part of corporate social responsibility just because of the home country's legislative and societal context. Also regarding the investors, their investment processes are naturally tuned to the societal context in which they practice their investment operations. All of the interviewed investors were either Finnish or Scandinavian investment institutions working in Finland.

At the time of the interviews, the case company worked in the fields of construction and building services. In general these businesses are characterized mostly by strong locality as well as labor-intensiveness. Historically these fields have not been seen as especially responsible but rather as fairly irresponsible by the general public. Especially the construction sector is often connected to issues such as the grey economy, bribery and other suspicious ways of doing business. At the same time the built environment is one of the greatest areas, beside transportation and food, which affects in the consumption of energy in society and thus in climate change.

As investors, four Nordic investment companies were interviewed for this study. Two of them were Finnish pension insurance companies, one was a Finnish banking and insurance company and the fourth one a Nordic financial services company, operating also in Finland. Thus, all of the investors interviewed could be classified as investment institutions, following the classification of Jansson and Biel (2011b). All of these investment companies were major owners of the case company and thus their opinions and understandings have great significance for the case company. This was also the criteria based on which the investors were chosen for the interviews.

The case company has a unique contextual setting, which affects the study to a certain extent. Especially the company's middle managers' way of understanding CSR is unique for this case company and cannot be generalized. The investors' way of understanding CSR would most probably be similar to many other investment institutions as well, including for example the role of ESG-analysis in the investment process.

3.2 Problem definition and research objectives

The research problem of this thesis arose when the case company was reflecting on the development of its corporate social responsibility issues. At the time it was unclear what the owners of the company, especially the big investment institutions, thought of CSR and especially what kind of things they expected from the case company related to it. On

the other hand it was also unclear what the perspective on CSR was inside the company, mostly among middle managers from different business segments and units. Thus, interviews were conducted with the main objective being to understand the ways the owners and middle managers understand corporate social responsibility in general and regarding the case company.

After the interviews it was noticed that the owners' way of understanding CSR was a little bit different from the company's internal way of seeing it. Thus, this thesis is concentrating on the differences and similarities between these two understandings. The interviews, which were conducted in 2011, two years before the framing of this study's research objectives, are observed from this perspective of differences and similarities.

The aims of the empirical study are:

- To comprehend investment institutions' way of understanding the case company's CSR.
- To comprehend the company's middle managers' way of understanding the case company's CSR.
- To recognize the differences and similarities of these two understandings of CSR and their implications on the development of the case company's CSR.

3.3 Research process

This chapter introduces the data collection and data analysis methods used in this empirical study. The methods are described based on literature and their selections are explained. Also basic information related to the empirical study is described.

3.3.1 Data collection

For the empirical data collection method, thematic interviews which are also called semi-structured interviews were chosen. The name of the thematic interviews comes

from the structure of the interview: there are certain themes which are covered during the interview, but no predetermined questions are presented in any predetermined order. Rather, thematic interviews are mostly characterized by being quite free discussions between the interviewer and interviewee. The themes covered during the interviews are however the same for every interviewee. The thematic interviews are especially good in emphasizing the interviewee's own interpretations and meanings they themselves give to different issues. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008)

The thematic interviews were chosen as the data collection method because it was extremely important to let the interviewees themselves explain their understanding on corporate social responsibility, without guiding the answers in any ways. Interviewing was also a good way for gathering rich data and exploring the ways the interviewees understood the concept of CSR. In some cases, when the interviewee was for example less talkative, the thematic interview gave the possibility to ask more questions in order to get the interviewee to describe his or her opinions and viewpoints.

The empirical study included five investor interviews covering four investment institutions and nine internal interviews in the company. Regarding the investor interviews, there were several persons present in some of the interviews so that altogether seven persons participated as interviewees. Among them were a couple of specialists in socially responsible investment, some analysts and some investment portfolio managers. Altogether the interviewees from the investment institutions were well aware of their company's socially responsible investment practices as well as their general investment process. All these investor interviews lasted about one hour. The case company's vice president of investor relations was also present in these interviews with the researcher.

Inside the case company, the interviewees represented middle management from different functions. They included the corporate chief shop steward, a business unit director, a business development director, a corporate communications director, two

regional directors, a project development director, a sales director and a business segment director. Of these, the corporate communications director and sales director were women; all the other interviewees were men.

None of the middle managers interviewed were part of the Group Management Board, but in practice the interviewees are the ones who manage significant parts of the everyday business. All of the interviewees had several years of experience working in the case company. Eight of the interviewees were Finnish and located in Finland while one was German located in Germany. Also all of these case company's internal interviews lasted for about one hour. In these interviews the researcher was always alone with the interviewee.

Except for the one German director, all of the other interviews of both investors and case company's middle managers were conducted in Finnish. The one interview with the German director was conducted in English. This study has been written in English and thus the writer of this thesis has translated the quotes from the interviews by herself. Some of the most challenging parts of the quote translations, which might affect the way the quote is understood, are explained as side notes with the quotes themselves.

3.3.2 Data analysis

Sapsform and Jupp (2006) describe one way of approaching the qualitative data analysis in an inductive way. The first step is data preparation, as the data is often in a form which cannot easily be analyzed as such, this being for example audio records. The audio tapes should be transcribed or at least summarized in order to enable the analysis. When the data is in a written format, the analysis is started by reading the data carefully through and by identifying potentially significant aspects from it. Notes could be made at the same time to pick up points from the data which are somehow interesting. (Sapsform and Jupp 2006)

The next step is categorizing the data under different themes (Sapsform and Jupp 2006). In the inductive research approach the themes are identified from the data itself and no theoretical framework is used to categorize the data. When the data has been categorized under some themes, the data under each theme can be reviewed and compared. This is done to further clarify the themes and their meanings, as well as possibly identifying subthemes under the previous main themes. The phase of going through the data and identifying themes from it is a strongly iterative process during which the data may get several different organized forms. (Sapsform and Jupp 2006)

The data analysis of the empirical data of this research was executed following the description of Sapsform and Jupp (2006). The data was first in the form of audio tapes. Both the investor interviews and case company's internal interviews were listened through several times and all the important parts of them were transformed into a written format. The five hours of investor interviews resulted in 15 pages of transcripts and notes. On the other hand the nine hours of case company's internal interviews resulted in 30 pages of transcripts and notes. However, only very restricted parts of the internal interviews were looked at in this study, covering mostly the first 5 pages of transcripts and notes, because major parts were not within the scope of this study and some parts of the interviews were strongly guided by the interviewer's questions on very specific content of CSR in the case company.

After having the transcripts and notes the iterative process of analyzing the data was started, first going through the written data, summarizing it, identifying important points, patterns, themes, and so on. At this stage 14 PowerPoint slides were formed of the investor interviews and around 5 slides of the internal interviews for structuring and analyzing the content. Finally, after several rounds of iteration, the content themes were formed which are presented in the next chapter. This iterative process of theme identification was however significantly stronger regarding the internal interviews. The investor interviews were pretty straightforward and the topics discussed were very

similar in all of the interviews, so that the content of these interviews was much more organized right from the beginning.

4 Data description and discussion

This chapter described the empirical data of this study and related discussion. The chapter is divided into two main parts: the investors' perspective and the case company's middle managers' perspective. The investors' perspective is further divided into two approaches: first the investors' general approach to socially responsible investment is described after which some special themes are presented. The company's middle managers' interviews are presented through themes which especially arose from the interviewee data. Finally the understandings of investors and middle managers are compared.

4.1 Investors' perspective

In this chapter the perspectives of four different investment institutions are presented. First the basic approach to socially responsible investment is presented from all of them, followed by a discussion of special themes raised up during the interviews.

4.1.1 Basic approaches to socially responsible investment

All the investment institutions which were interviewed had some kind of an approach to socially responsible investment and ESG-issues in the investment process. The approach differed to some extent based on the type of investment company in question. The investment companies represented slightly different forms of investment institutions, including for example pension insurance companies and financial services companies. Thus, the business models of the investment companies which were interviewed were different, as well as their possibilities to implement socially responsible investment practices in their work. However, all of the investment companies in this study were

signatories of the United Nations-supported Principles of Responsible Investment (PRI) and had to implement the principles of socially responsible investment at least at the extent required by the PRI.

In general, regarding the different practical ways of implementing the principles and practices of SRI, the approaches used by the investment companies interviewed were closely aligned with the different approaches described in Chapter 2.3 of the theoretical background. Negative and positive screenings were discussed with most of the interviewees and both approaches were in use. Absolute analysis was used by one of the investors and thematic investment was somewhat used by a couple of the investors. CSR and sustainability indices were discussed, but none of the interviewed investors used them in their investment process, having clear justifications for that. Instead, shareholder engagement process and the integrated approach were both used more or less by all of the investment institutions interviewed.

Below the investment companies' approaches are described in more detail. The companies are referred to as Investor 1, Investor 2, Investor 3 and Investor 4.

Investor 1: Nordic financial services company

In the Nordic financial services company a specialist in socially responsible investment was interviewed. When discussing the company's investment products which take ESG-issues into account, the interviewee explained that the viewpoint is twofold. The investment products specifically integrating the ESG-viewpoint can be divided into negatively and positively screened ones.

In the negatively screened investment products certain fields of operations are excluded such as cigarettes, alcohol and arms. The Investor 1 also uses external service providers in providing them with lists of companies that are known to have violated international norms recently, so called black lists. The companies mentioned on these black lists are also excluded from the negatively screened investment portfolios. These negatively

screened investment portfolios are made for customers who specifically ask for these kinds of services such as churches, this service being very close to the definition of ethical investment.

The more common way of approaching the subject for Investor 1 is however through positive screening. In the positively screened investment products the analysis is made based on two main perspectives: trends and stakeholder analysis. First Investor 1 looks at global trends such as climate change, demographic changes and globalization and analyses possible investments based on their ability to respond to these trends both through the management of risks and possibilities. Then a stakeholder analysis is conducted, where companies with especially good stakeholder relations providing them with competitive advantage are looked for. The motive for this is to increase the profits of the investment portfolio and the idea is to take the best companies in the portfolio instead of excluding the worst.

In addition to these two types of products offered by Investor 1 which take ESG-issues into account in a very integrated manner, Investor 1 has also minimum requirements which it follows in all of its investment operations. These minimum requirements are based on international norms and companies violating basic international norms are excluded from Investor 1's investment universe, if these companies are not willing to begin to improve their operational weaknesses in these areas after an engagement process has taken place.

Investor 2: Finnish pension insurance company

In the Finnish pension insurance company two persons were interviewed at the same time: a specialist in socially responsible investment and an investment portfolio manager. However, mainly the specialist in socially responsible investment answered the questions and explained the pension insurance company's ways of approaching the issue.

The way the Finnish pension insurance company approaches socially responsible investment is based on three main principles. These principles are active ownership, international norms as minimum requirements and integrated corporate social responsibility analysis. The active ownership is expressed in many ways, one of them being an active, ongoing discussion with their investments' executive management and members of the Board. Representatives of the Investor 2 are also present and active in almost all of the shareholders' meetings of their Finnish company investments.

The international norms form minimum requirements for Investor 2's investments, just like for Investor 1 as well. The Investor 2 requires that in addition to international legislation, the investments need to also follow internationally accepted norms such as OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and UN's Global Compact. The Investor 2 uses an external service provider to help to ensure that the investments follow the minimum requirements. If these requirements are not fulfilled, Investor 2 begins an engagement process with the company. If the engagement process is not possible for some reason or does not lead to any acceptable results, the investment needs to be sold.

The third principle is integrated approach to corporate social responsibility. The ESG-issues are always part of the analysis of a potential investment and the SRI specialist of Investor 2 supports the investment portfolio managers in taking the ESG-issues into account in their investment decisions. Also external information sources are used as a support. Investor 2 emphasized that the ESG-issues are this way integrated into the daily portfolio management.

Investor 3: Finnish banking and insurance company

In the Finnish banking and insurance company two separate interviews were held. In the first one a person who was a SRI specialist in the company beside the tasks of being an investment portfolio manager was interviewed. In the second interview there were two

persons present as interviewees: a sell-side analyst who also analyses the case company and the head of equity research.

In this company the approach on SRI is mostly affected by the United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment. Of these, the most important principles for the company are the integration of responsibility aspects into the investment process and the principle of being an active owner. Also the principle of encouraging companies to act responsibly and report on their responsibility is important. The Investor 3 divides their approach to ESG into two aspects: the investment's ways of working and the investment's products and services. This division is used throughout the operations, when ESG-issues are dealt with.

All the actions of the Investor 3 around ESG-issues are largely characterized by strong integration into the normal operations. For example ESG-data points have been added to the analysis made of companies internally. On the sell-side the Investor 3 has also produced ESG-analysis of companies as a service for their clients. Furthermore, when portfolio managers go to meet companies' management, there are ESG-related questions prepared for the meetings before hand. Altogether ESG-issues are already a part of, or are becoming a part of the normal business processes of Investor 3.

Investor 4: Finnish pension insurance company

In the second Finnish pension insurance company a portfolio manager was interviewed who concentrates more on SRI compared to the other portfolio managers of the same company. First interview for Investor 4 was held at the same time with the other investment companies, but a second interview was held two years later, at the time of writing this thesis. In the second interview the structure of the interview was exactly the same as in the first one and the meaning was practically to update the information related to Investor 4. The information presented here is mostly based on the second interview, but it does not differ much from the situation at the time of the other interviews.

For Investor 4, long-term direct share investments to different companies are very important in their investment operations and socially responsible investment is also approached mainly from the viewpoint of direct investments. Investor 4's investment philosophy could be summarized so that they only invest in companies in which they believe in the long run. The basic idea for them is to know all the possible and existing investments very well by themselves. This approach is reflected also in their socially responsible investment approach, as Investor 4 has formed their own principles which they follow when analyzing an investment's operations. Through these principles Investor 4 evaluates the possible risks and possibilities related to ESG-issues in a company.

The corporate social responsibility issues are part of the Investor 4's normal investment processes so that every portfolio manager is also taking these issues continuously into account when getting to know a possible investment. Investor 4 has no minimum requirements determined at the moment, but they were currently developing their approach further and minimum requirements are one possible way to approach ESG-issues in the future.

4.1.2 Special themes

In this chapter, several special themes are pointed out which were mentioned and discussed in many of the investor interviews. These themes help to deepen the understanding of the investor perspective on socially responsible investment and corporate social responsibility.

Motives

The first special theme dealt in the investor interviews was the investors' motives to take socially responsible investment into account. What was especially clear regarding the motives of the investors was that all of the four investment companies were purely

business driven. The investor companies talked about risks, turnovers and profits of their investments as their motives for SRI, some of them slightly emphasising the risk perspective. They also specified that they were interested of companies' ESG-performance because they believed that the companies which manage ESG-issues well also produce better risk adjusted profits.

This approach and way of thinking was totally clear for all of the interviewees and no hesitation was presented. Basically the investors saw that taking ESG-issues into account in their investment analysis, in an integrated manner, will help them to know better their investments and thus make better analysis and investment decisions. These motives and this approach were justified by the interviewees through several examples. Below Investor 4 describes this approach in a very clear way:

Investor 4: "Our aim is to find as good profit as possible in all market circumstances on the chosen level of risk. So also in this corporate social responsibility issue our starting point is its effects on the profits, as our aim is to get a return for our investment. We are not any kind of do-gooder in the sense that we do not go and hug any palm trees or want to effect in environmental issues on a larger scale outside the companies we invest in. That's not our aim."

"We see that [analyzing the ESG-issues] brings us better results through two different channels. Superior returns are gained because the risk concerning a certain company is smaller as these companies which we try to choose have probably better risk management, or at least we hope so, at least we try to search for those kinds of companies. And then better profits are gained because we try to search for companies which can take an advantage of these so called positive risks, such as related to environmental issues. Companies which for example produce goods and services which everyone thinks are environmentally friendly. That way it is a clear business driver."

However, Investor 2 saw the nature of ESG-issues as a business driver fairly differently than the other investors. When product and service possibilities related to for example environmental issues were discussed, they said it might be a reason to invest more into a company, but in that case they do not see it as a matter related to CSR. Thus, for Investor 2 CSR was all about risk management and possible positive business drivers related to the same themes seemed to be part of “normal business”.

Investor 2: “Assigning excess weight on some company can happen for example when we see that a company’s product development or product mix has something which is regarded as a thing of the future, has potential in the future, whether it be related to climate change or whatever. But then this doesn’t have a corporate social responsibility stamp. That because of corporate social responsibility [the company would gain excess weight in the investment portfolio].”

“If there is a company which has all these governance and responsibility issues on a very, very good level, then we can tick a box meaning that these issues have been taken care of, there’s basically nothing to worry about. But for it to be a reason to make an especially big investment into the company, I wouldn’t say that, this is case-by-case. The company’s total attractiveness as an investment is the decisive issue.”

Even though both ethical investment and socially responsible investment were represented in the operations of the investors, the motives seemed to be always coming down to the pure risk and profit perspective. Of the four investors Investor 1 had ethical investment most clearly as a product they were offering for their clients, but also in this case the ethical features of it were product characteristics and the aim of the ethical investment product was still to please the customers and this way achieve profitable business for the investor itself.

When the motives of the investors are compared to the different types of CSR presented in the theoretical background, the viewpoint is fairly clear. Regarding the CSR types of Lantos (2001), the investors' perspective is best compatible with the strategic CSR, which concentrate on the benefit of the company through providing benefit for society. If compared with the theory groups of Garriga and Melé (2004), the investors' way of understanding CSR is closest to the instrumental theories: businesses' meaning is to be an instrument for creating wealth for their owners. The investors' understanding was also very close to the thoughts of Milton Friedman (1962).

The investors' motives for SRI and CSR were thus purely based on the creation of wealth for shareholders. The investors interviewed had no thoughts or concerns for society in general, for businesses' responsibility towards society, for taking different values into account or anything like that. All of the four investment institutions interviewed seemed to think that by applying the principles and approaches of socially responsible investment, they can increase the amount of monetary value created.

When acknowledging that the investors interviewed were all representatives of the investor type of investment institutions, their motives for SRI are fairly well aligned with the studies of Jansson and Biel (2011a, 2011b). As presented in Chapter 2.4 of the theoretical background, Jansson and Biel (2011b) found out that investment institutions motives for SRI were especially based on the belief of lower financial risks and better long-term returns. Compared to the other investor groups, investment institutions were most positive regarding these financial benefits and were least motivated by social and environmental values. This approach was supported also in Jansson and Biel's other study (2011a) and is the case also in this study.

Communication and reporting

The second special theme dealt with the interviewees was CSR communication and reporting by the investments, for example by the case company. The investors' thoughts on communication and reporting reflected their overall motives for being interested of

ESG-issues of companies. The investors emphasized the importance of concentrating on material¹ issues in the communication and reporting, which is fairly natural as it is the material issues within ESG-issues in general which affect the investment case of a certain company.

The investors also wanted to hear about the material issues from the top management of the companies and wanted reporting to follow the ideas of integrated reporting, referring to a method of integrating material ESG-reporting among traditional financial reporting. Regarding communication channels, the investors wanted ESG-related information through the same information channels than other investor communication.

All these opinions related to communicational issues are clearly consequences of the investors' general way of thinking: material ESG-issues affect the investment analysis and decision making related to a certain company and thus the investors want to know about the material ESG-issues along with all the other information they get from the company. For example Investor 3 explains their viewpoint on who they would like to talk with about the ESG-issues:

Investor 3: "We want to talk about these issues with the CEO. If we would ask for an audience in the company and would also like to talk about these issues and then if the company sends a Corporate Social Responsibility Director to talk with, then I would interpret the situation so that these issues are not that important for the CEO. ... If the CEO truly beliefs in these issues, then he or she also knows about the material issues and wants to communicate them as part of a normal visit to the company."

¹ The English work 'material' refers to the Finnish word of 'olennainen', which is commonly used when discussing CSR.

Several of the investors saw that at the time of the interviews, the CSR communication of companies in general included a lot of other themes as well than just the material issues which would be interesting for the investors. Or if the CSR communication was more restricted, then some of the material issues were also easily missing. Thus, most of the investors saw that there is still a lot to improve in the CSR communication, especially regarding its focus. This is described by Investor 4 in the following:

Investor 4: "It would be best if the information could be condensed as much as possible, to describe only the material issues. It should come from the company, that there it is thought what is actually material for the business. It is useless to report issues which are not material. These issues then just disturb the whole and make the understanding of the investment case more difficult."

It was also reminded during the interviews that reporting should not be over emphasized in companies when developing corporate social responsibility. For example Investor 2 stated it in the following way:

Investor 2: "The absolute value of corporate social responsibility shouldn't be to report with a fancy report. Instead the corporate social responsibility related development needs to be strongly attached to the everyday business and the corporate social responsibility development must have business drivers. After that it is good practice to report about it in an open and trustworthy manner. But not so, that something is done with reporting in mind."

Content themes

The third and final special theme was the actual content of CSR related to the case company. These content issues are heavily dependent on the industry and company in question and thus cannot be generalized. However, these are important when comparing with the case company's internal understanding on CSR.

The content themes which the investors found to be material regarding the CSR of the case company included for example the risk of corruption, other illegal actions and ways of preventing them, safety of the construction materials for the consumers, the grey economy, energy efficiency of buildings and risks concerning certain countries of operation. For example Investor 2 describes these in the following way:

Investor 2: “If we think what a normal person associates with the construction industry, it is related to the purchase of plots, back dooring, slipping envelopes under tables.”

“Regarding the industry, things such as bribery, corruption, the legality or illegality of the workforce, certain quality issues, the safety of the construction materials for the consumers and so on, these kinds of issues would be good to highlight.”

Investor 3 had done a wide analysis of the ESG-issues of Finnish companies which reflects the themes Investor 3 was interested in. Regarding the segment “construction and materials” the risks and possibilities which Investor 3 had recognized are listed below:

- Environmental viewpoint: tightening legislation; the rising costs of energy, materials and logistics
- Social viewpoint: grey economy
- Governance viewpoint: cartels
- Possibilities viewpoint: the renewal of buildings to fulfill the new environmental regulations; the energy efficiency directive of buildings

However, the investors also emphasized that the case company itself is best in determining the material ESG-issues in its operations. Investor 4 put it this way:

Investor 4: “You shouldn’t think that the investors know what they would like to know. We do not know what is material! It has to be in the companies, to know which are material issues for the business and which are not. We only try to guess it.”

4.2 Case company’s internal perspective

This chapter presents the case company’s internal perspective on corporate social responsibility through middle managers’ interviews. First some background information is described of the case company’s CSR activities, which is followed by the description of the interviewees’ understandings of CSR.

4.2.1 Background of the case company’s CSR activities

At the time of the interviews the case company was beginning a more systematic development of corporate social responsibility issues as such. Earlier on, corporate social responsibility had been a part of for example annual reports, but these were mainly done by the corporate communications department from a communicational viewpoint. The company had had a few attempts to approach corporate social responsibility as it was a theme which was talked about in e.g. media. However, a suitable approach for the company had not been found and after some time the development of corporate social responsibility as such had been abandoned.

However, several themes which can be included under the concept of corporate social responsibility were in continuous development in the company. For example occupational safety had been a strong theme in the company and it had been strongly developed. Also product features such as energy efficiency in buildings had been a focus. Thus it could also be said that these issues had been developed as an integral part of the normal business operations, even though these were not grouped under the theme

of corporate social responsibility and were not seen as especially corporate social responsibility related development.

Regarding the company's values, they had existed for around 30 years in an unchanged format at the time of the interviews. After the interviews of the middle managers and before the writing of this thesis, the company underwent a wide and participatory process related to the development and implementation of the corporate values. Hundreds of employees participated in workshops in which the corporate values were reflected on and as a result of these discussions, the values were slightly renewed. The main aim of this extensive process was to increase the awareness of the corporate values and especially remind the employees that the values are to be followed. The implementation of the renewed values continued at the time of writing this thesis. The corporate values touched many of the themes related to CSR as well, but were formulated as value statements.

4.2.2 Middle managers' understanding of CSR

In this chapter the middle managers' understandings of corporate social responsibility are looked at more precisely. Four different approaches are presented, three of them representing different motivations for CSR and the fourth one concentrating on the content themes which arose during the middle manager interviews.

The middle managers who were interviewed had basically no significant prior knowledge related to CSR. This was easily visible in the interviews, as the answers given by the interviewees for the first question of the interview "What comes to your mind from the concept of corporate social responsibility²?" were in no way structured. The answers varied widely, partly depending on the interviewees' work tasks and stakeholder groups they were interacting with. The answers were mainly based on their

² In Finnish the question was: "Mitä sinulle tulee mieleen käsitteestä 'vastuullinen yritystoiminta'?"

everyday understanding of CSR, which had certainly been influenced for example by the general discussion in society related to CSR and related topics. However, it is good to remember that the understandings of CSR which the interviewees had are the basis of their everyday actions.

In most cases the interviewees provided a long list of very different things which they associated with the concept of CSR. Also several of the interviewees described more than one motivational approach for CSR. However, one of these motivational approaches was mentioned in most of the interviews and this was the approach of “Honesty, ethical business practices, corporate values and culture”. Issues related to this approach were mentioned often and in addition the interviewees stressed these issues as very important and integral parts of CSR of the case company.

The interviewees’ answers are presented below. Most of the quotes are from the answers for the first question of the whole interview. However, some quotes have been picked up from other parts of the interviews but in these cases the interviewees continued to explain their own understandings here and there during the interview.

Honesty, ethical business practices, corporate values and culture

Almost all the interviewed middle managers referred to a special corporate culture and corporate values in their answers, when enquiring about first thoughts related to corporate social responsibility. The values seemed to be very important for the middle managers all over the company and they strongly connected them to the concept of CSR. For them the corporate culture and values represented a strong support for their daily work and they seemed to give the middle managers a mental backbone to lean on in difficult situations. The interviewees mentioned that by following the corporate values it is easy to work in the company and that the corporate values support the everyday decision making in the company.

Thus, the middle managers approached CSR first and foremost through a very personal viewpoint. The corporate culture and values were a factor supporting especially the middle managers' own daily work on a personal level. For example below a business unit director sees CSR to be strongly related to trust, honesty and people being allowed to follow their own values.

Business unit director: "First thing what comes to my mind is trust. To be able to trust and to be honest. ... So acting in an honest manner and so that it is for the benefit of the company and its customers. If you think about [the case company's] values and follow them in your own work, it is easy to be in this company and it is easy to do your work. ... It is allowed in here to follow one's own values and act in ways that feel comfortable."

Also a business development director saw CSR and the corporate culture to be very strongly related, as he explains below:

Business development director: "A big part of our corporate social responsibility in general comes through our corporate culture. [The case company] has always had a strong corporate culture. Our values are one thing which reflects our culture. Even so that if there is a problem or challenge in the everyday work, and if you in that situation act according to our corporate values, you cannot go far down the drain. You get a strong backbone from there and it is the kind of strength [of the case company] which cannot really be reported."

This middle managers' approach which is based on corporate values and the way these corporate values support the daily work is not clearly connected to any of the CSR classifications presented in the theoretical background. Basically the answers showed that the middle managers approached CSR on a very personal level and felt their personal values being closely aligned with the corporate values, this alignment making it

easy for them to work in the case company. The interviewees also connected this fact very strongly with the concept of CSR.

In the theoretical background the different classifications of CSR were mostly based on looking at the issues from society's viewpoint (macro-social approach of the 50s and 60s) or the company's and shareholders' viewpoint (win-win approach of the 90s). Thus, this kind of personal approach based on corporate culture and values was not discussed at all.

The strongly personal approach of the middle managers to CSR is interesting as it is worth of noting that the interviewees were significant managers in the case company and thus should understand well the company's overall perspective and shareholders' viewpoint. One potential reason for the strength of the personal approach to CSR could simply be that the corporate culture and leadership style in the case company is especially supportive for value-based thinking. Also the persons who have been selected as middle managers have probably been selected because of their good alignment with the corporate culture and values. However, it is difficult to say exactly why the personal approach to CSR was so strong. The personal and organizational approaches are reflected more in Chapter 5.2.

Reputation and long-term approach

Also a very different and strongly organizational understanding emerged from the interviews compared to the personal understanding presented above. This understanding was related to the case company's reputation and its protection, which was strongly linked to corporate social responsibility. However, only some of the interviewees raised this approach and also they presented it only after several other thoughts. Below the business development director explains his viewpoints on this beside some concrete elements of CSR of the case company.

Business development director: “The biggest degradation of value for this company would be the loss of our reputation. And the easiest way to lose it is if we act irresponsibly. The loss of reputation can be a result of issues related to quality, an environmental catastrophe, evading taxes or other similar neglects, which will lead to losing our reputation in the current media culture.”

When the corporate communications director was asked how well the case company operates regarding CSR, she pointed out that it is also beneficial for the company itself in the long-term, to work in a responsible way:

Corporate communications director: “In the end we work in a fairly responsible way. Because it is also our benefit in the long-term, and we are quite long-term oriented in our way of thinking. So if you think you want to do profitable business in the long-term, then it is wise to bare the financial responsibility, such as rejection of the grey economy and following ethical ways of working. It will be worth taking care of your personnel and also taking care of environmental issues... I see that when we operate in a wise way, we operate also in a responsible way.”

Also the regional director brought up both reputational and long-term viewpoints:

Regional director: “As a company which has operated a long time in the market we have to remember that our brand, reputation and position are built on our responsible decisions. We cannot assume that in the future we could get rid of our actions done in the past. We have to understand that when we do something, we’ll be on this market probably after ten years bearing the consequences of our actions.”

This understanding which concentrates on the case company’s reputation and takes a long term viewpoint is strongly organizational and looks CSR from the case company’s

perspective. If compared with the theoretical background presented, the ideas of strategic CSR (Lantos 2001) and a win-win situation between the company and society were thus familiar for some of the interviewees, mainly through this theme of corporate reputation and long-term approach. The interviewees saw that it is beneficial for the case company itself to work in a socially responsible way, the responsible ways of working paying off in the long-term.

Also the way of thinking of the integrative theories (Garriga & Melé 2004) is visible in the quotes above. The integrative theories thought that business is dependent on society, this dependence giving a reason for companies to concentrate on CSR and the fulfilment of the expectations of society and stakeholders around them. This was clearly visible for example in the quote from the regional director.

The occurrence of this understanding which is merging the case company's, shareholders' and society's interests was fairly predictable, all though it was surprising that this viewpoint wasn't emphasized more by the interviewees. As described in the theoretical background, this understanding of CSR has been gaining popularity during the recent decades and for example among the interviewed investors this understanding was well present.

Being responsible, taking care, doing things like they should be done

A third way of understanding CSR was detectable through the ways the middle managers talked about CSR. Expressions such as "being responsible", "taking care" and "doing things like they should be done"³ were used several times during the interviews. These kinds of expressions and ways of approaching CSR had a strong basis in the values and moral standards of the interviewees themselves. The interviewees seemed to think that there is certain level of "responsibility" that the operations of the case

³ In Finnish these were for example "olla vastuullisia", "toimitaan vastuullisesti", "kannetaan vastuu", "pidetään huolta" and "hoidetaan asiat niin kuin kuuluu".

company should achieve, issues that “should be done”. This level of “responsibility” seemed to basically be grounded in the interviewees’ personal understanding of what is right and wrong.

Comparing to the theoretical background, this way of talking can be connected to the CSR type of ethical CSR (Lantos 2001) and political and ethical theories (Garriga and Melé 2004). All these theoretical approaches were mostly about moral obligations and the right thing to do, which are exactly the themes reflected in the expressions of the middle managers.

For example the business development director below saw it to be important that the case company takes care of its employees. He also saw the employment of employees to be “a responsibility” of the case company:

Business development director: “We take care of our personnel, for example putting effort on occupational safety. Then we also have responsibility over the employment of our employees.”

The interviewees also raised responsibility towards society to a high priority in the contents of CSR. Below the corporate chief shop steward refers also to the existence of a general understanding on “how things should be done”.

Corporate chief shop steward: “Next there is responsibility toward society. This means that we do things like they should be done, such as pay taxes, other payments and so on.”

Project development director: “It includes responsibility towards society.”

Also responsibility towards customers was raised, which often manifests itself through the product or service and its quality.

Corporate chief shop steward: "Then there is the responsibility of the product we make. What is given for the customer."

Compared to the two previous understandings of CSR, which approached CSR from a personal and organizational viewpoint, this way of understanding CSR is mostly based on society's point of view on a more macro level. The middle managers clearly felt that there are certain social rules which should be followed by the case company, no matter what they mean for example for the case company's financial position.

Content themes

Finally some contextual themes arose during the interviews, representing the concrete actions that CSR would mean based on the understandings of the middle managers. These concrete themes included for example occupational safety issues and taking care of the employees by stressing the importance of occupational safety and employee wellbeing at work. Also some environmental issues were mentioned, such as energy efficiency of buildings, the case company's carbon footprint together with climate change and sustainable development in general.

Ethical ways of working were raised separately as a content area of CSR, as well as good corporate governance and rejection of the grey economy. Following the local laws of the countries the case company was operating in was also mentioned. Some of the interviewees pointed out issues related to the subcontractors' ways of doing their business and the case company's role in those relationships.

However, the so called financial responsibility was commented in a conflicting manner. One of the interviewees had read the company's public materials related to corporate social responsibility before the interview. He had noticed material related to financial responsibility and commented it in the following way:

A regional director (German): “In the first respect when I would read something about corporate social responsibility, I would connect it to responsibility towards the public, or environmental responsibility or social responsibility and so on. But not as we have it, including financial responsibility. The thoughts behind it are quite clear to me, but I wouldn’t connect it to corporate social responsibility.”

However, another interviewee began to explain her understanding of corporate social responsibility in the following manner:

Sales director: “It includes a lot of things. Corporate social responsibility means of course that the company’s business is profitable...”

These quotes show that the understandings of CSR of the middle managers were not always of the same opinion and different kinds of understandings were common. Still many of these contextual themes mentioned were brought up by several interviewees and no great disagreement seemed to exist regarding these.

4.3 Comparison of the different understandings

In this chapter the understandings of investors and middle managers are compared. All in all the investors’ understanding was fairly clear and structured and all the interviewed investors saw the motives behind CSR and SRI in a fairly similar way. For the interviewed investors, which represented solely investment institutions as investor type, SRI was a way to achieve better investment results in a financial sense. They saw that the ESG-issues affect in the risk-reward –profile of the potential investments, making the ESG-issues interesting for them.

Contrary to the investors’ understanding, the understandings of the case company’s middle managers were much unstructured, which is of course understandable, as these

middle management representatives have very little to do with the definitions and approaches to CSR in their daily work. Beside the unstructured nature of their thoughts on CSR and its meaning, the middle managers represented several different understandings of the business-society relationship and motives behind CSR. Some of the managers identified the existence of moral obligations towards society while others saw that by benefiting the stakeholders of the company, the company itself will also gain benefits in the long term. These two viewpoints, which were also represented in the theoretical background, were accompanied by a third viewpoint which concentrated on the personal values' alignment with corporate values.

The differences in the investors' and case company internal understandings are illustrated in Figure 4 compared to the CSR types of Lantos (2001) and CSR theory groups of Garriga and Melé (2004). In addition the middle managers' personal viewpoint is added into the picture, below the previously presented framework. As it can be seen, there is little overlap in the two understandings of CSR. Both investors and case company's middle managers had thoughts which could be seen to represent strategic CSR and a win-win situation, but otherwise the internal managers had several different understandings of CSR which are all different from the way the investors understood CSR.

However, when the content themes represented by the investors and middle managers are compared, it can be seen that these are significantly closer to each other than the motivational or it could even be said philosophical parts of the understandings. Ethical ways of working, rejection of the grey economy and environmental issues. For example these were themes which were mentioned by both interviewee groups. Thus it seems that even though the motivations for CSR may be very different, still the concrete actions which are talked about may be very similar. This is interesting and it could actually be questioned that what does it matter what the motivational factors are, as long as the concrete outcomes are so similar.

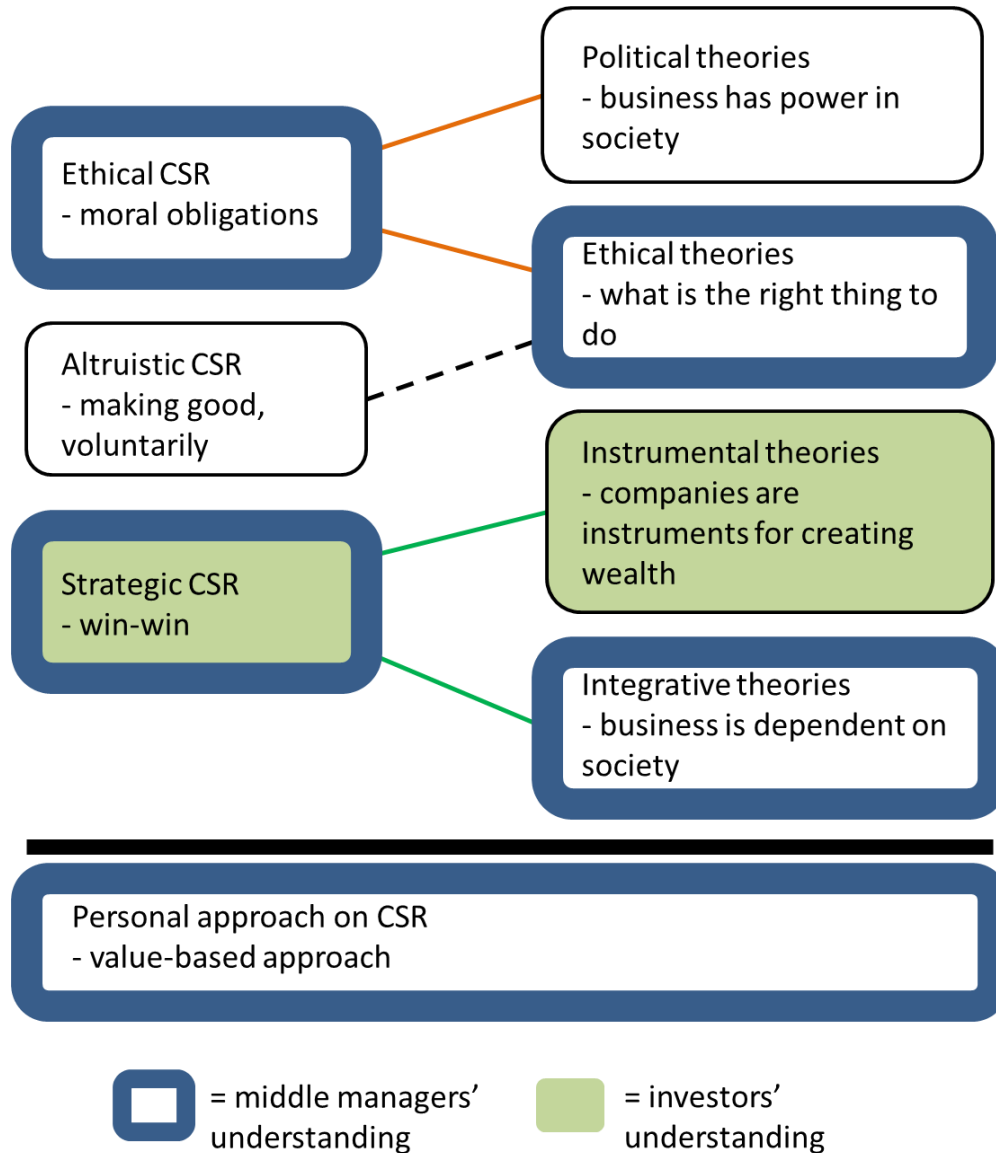


Figure 4 Middle managers' and investors' understandings compared to the classifications of Lantos (2001) and Garriga and Melé (2004)

5 Reflections and conclusions

This part of the study presents reflections and conclusions. The first three chapters reflect on the theoretical and practical issues of this study. Of these the first chapter reflects on business' role in society by comparing the empirical results to the theoretical background. The second chapter raises questions related to a separation of a personal and an organizational understanding of CSR. Finally the third chapter reflects on the practical consequences of the results of this research. These reflections are followed by a summarizing answer for the research questions, an evaluation of the research as well as some topics for future research.

5.1 Role of business in society

What seems to be at the foundation of this whole study, both the theoretical discussion and the empirical research, is a debate of the role of business and its organizational form, companies, in society. Corporate social responsibility has been a theme which has connected the discussion around this theme under a wide umbrella concept, including very different kinds of viewpoints and ways of approaching the subject. In fact business' role in society and thoughts related to it reflect very fundamental assumptions of the social system we are all living in.

What is right and wrong and who can define these? What is currently the aim of all the social activities taking place in society? What should be their aim? How should the social world be organized and managed? What is acceptable and what is not? When going deeper into CSR, it is fairly easy to finally end up to these fundamental questions of the current social system and the capitalist order of the world. Do companies exist for serving society or their shareholders and is there a contradiction between these or not? What does "serving society" or "serving the shareholders" mean in the end?

In Chapter 2.1 the development of CSR over time was presented. From this development, at least three distinct viewpoints can be detected. First of all there is the

viewpoint of Friedman (1962), in which social responsibilities of companies are seen as a huge threat for free society. Secondly there is the viewpoint presented for example by Bowen (1953) and Davis (1960), in which it is basically mandatory for companies to act for the benefit of society. Thirdly there is the viewpoint of finding a win-win situation between the shareholders' and society's interests, presented for example by Wallish and McGovan (1970) and Drucker (1984).

Of the three viewpoints, let's first discuss shortly the first one of them. In the empirical results a total denial of the social responsibilities of corporations was not found. However, it must be remembered that the investors which were interviewed, were all committed to the principles of responsible investment and were thus somehow admitting the need for social responsiveness of companies. Neither was this viewpoint presented among the middle managers of the case company. Still it is probable that there are many investors in the world supporting Friedman's thoughts and practically thinking that a win-win situation for society and shareholders cannot be found in any other ways than when companies concentrate purely on "making as much money for their stockholders as possible" (Friedman 1962).

Still there is one interesting point in Friedman's quote. Also Friedman admits that companies must "stay within the rules of the game". This staying within the rules of the game was in fact very strongly visible in both the investors' and middle managers' thoughts. For investors the compliance with the rules of the game is in other words good risk management, as breaking the rules is easily a fairly big risk for a company both financially and regarding its reputation. Investor 2 states in Chapter 4.1.2./Motives that SRI is for them mainly about ticking a box, meaning that there's nothing to worry about. So, for them SRI is about ensuring that the companies "stay within the rules of the game" and are thus less risky? Seems very much like it.

Also the middle managers stressed for example that it is important for companies to "do things like they should be done". But what does this actually mean? In fact, is this about

staying within the rules of the game? It actually seems so. But then in this case a question arises: what the rules are and who defines them? These rules could be thought as legal rules set by governments, or then social rules set by the wide public, by the stakeholders of the companies. If the rules are thought to be social rules, set by the public, then the viewpoints of Friedman and for example Bowen (1953) and Davis (1960) aren't actually that far apart.

The second viewpoint presented an obligation for companies to work for the benefit of society. Bowen (1953) uses the following phrasing: "... to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of the society". Davis (1960) on the other hand saw businessmen to have a responsibility to "nurture and develop human values". What do these actually mean? In fact these sentences seem to include something more than just following the rules of the game, even though also covering it. These seem to encompass a positive contribution to society.

This kind of viewpoint was not clearly visible in the investors' interviews but was more easily detectable in the interviews of the middle managers. Investor 4 even stresses that "we are not any kind of do-gooder" (Chapter 4.1.2/Motives), whereas the middle managers talked a lot about human values and their importance. But then again, who gets to decide what the objectives and values of the society are? Governments or maybe the public?

Let's shortly think about some basic issues related to companies and their relations with their customers. Basically customers buy products and services which produce value for them in some way, contributing in making their lives somehow better. Thus, companies want to offer products and services which produce as much value for their customers as possible, so that the customers would by their products and the companies would be able to produce money for their shareholders. During this process, is not it so that by producing products and services which have value for the customers, the companies

actually contribute in the achievement of the objectives of society? It seems so, if society is thought to be composed of a group of people, also called customers from the companies' viewpoint.

Thus if we combine the thought that companies stay within the rules of the game, the rules being set by the public, with the thought that companies also aspire to produce value for their customers through their products and services, do we achieve Bowen's thought of "...desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society"? There might be people who disagree in this, but I would say that at least we are fairly close.

Finally the third viewpoint was about finding a win-win situation where the interest of the shareholders and society are combined. This unification of the interests was already slightly discussed above and was also visible in the interviews of both investors and middle managers. The middle managers believed that in the long term it is beneficial for the case company itself to work in a socially responsible way. Also the investors clearly thought that good management of ESG-issues in a company pays off for the shareholders as well, as they were interested of these issues in the companies.

Wallish and McGovan (1970) offered a fresh and different kind of viewpoint to this win-win situation regarding the investors. In Chapter 2.1 Wallish and McGovan (1970) presented that the social activities of corporations are beneficial for the investors which have diversified stock portfolios, because the social benefits caused by a single company are collected by all the companies together in the society, making the social activities thus interesting for the investors practicing diversification. However, the well diversified investors of this study did not seem to think this way, even though this was neither especially asked from them.

The investors of this study concentrated purely on single companies and seemed not to connect the diversification of ownership in any ways with the social actions of companies and their benefits. Rather the investors seemed to take the societal context of

each country as a given fact and concentrate on companies' abilities to stay within the rules of the game in the challenging surroundings of certain countries. I would assume that the investors would think the social benefits of companies' social actions to be so small that they wouldn't change the situation in the country or society in question.

Finally it seems that in all of these three viewpoints we talk about the same issue. What are the boundaries inside which the companies are free to act as they wish and who have the power to set these boundaries? And what are society's objectives and values that the companies should contribute to and who have the power to set these objectives and values? At some point companies may have thought that it is the governments of the countries in which they operate in, but currently it seems increasingly to be the public.

If the public is thought as the actor setting the boundaries for the companies and objectives and values of society, then the different viewpoints of the business-society discussion are actually fairly close to each other. It is also easily justifiable to present the public as the main actor, because if the companies break the boundaries set by the public, the public can also punish these companies. Furthermore, the public is also the one which decides which kind of products, services and operations contribute to the objectives and values of the society through buying them. Of course this is a strongly simplified view of the world, someone could even say naïve. Still this kind of reasoning leads to the stakeholder approach towards which CSR developed during the 1990s, as well as to an elimination of the contradictions between society's and shareholders' interests. By following this reasoning, the stakeholders', society's in general and shareholders' interests are fairly aligned.

5.2 Personal and organizational understandings of CSR

When reflecting on the investors' and middle managers' understandings of CSR, as well as the Chapter 2.4 of the theoretical background in which the different investors'

motives for SRI were reviewed, an interesting theme began to come up. This is the theme of personal and organizational understandings and the differences between these.

In the theoretical background the investors were divided into investment institutions, institutional investors and private investors. When the members of these three groups were enquired, in Jansson and Biel's study (2011b), about the importance of different values, the questions were in fact posed slightly differently. The interviewees of investment institutions and institutional investors were asked about the importance of certain values for their organizations where as private investors were asked about the importance of the corresponding values for themselves. This was intentional, as when approaching the interviewees of investment institutions and institutional investors the meaning in the study was to approach them in their professional roles, not as individual citizens. Contrary to this, the private investors were approached as individual citizens having financial investments. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

Jansson and Biel (2011b) themselves reflected on the differences between professional roles and being an individual citizen. They explained that the investment institutions are assumed to act in very specific ways in society, those assumptions covering for example that they follow strictly financial judgments and beliefs. Thus the investment institutions are constrained in their actions by the external expectations as well as internal guidelines and policies. It may also be harmful for the careers of the fund managers inside investment institutions to depart from these expectations and internal guidelines, assigning strong mental restrictions for any attempts to be guided by anything else than financial measures. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

What comes to the private investors, they have practically no external restrictions guiding their investment decisions and are thus much freer to apply different justifications for investment decisions beside the financial ones. This means that besides financial considerations, private investors are free to be guided also by their own values. This freedom applies at least partly to institutional investors as well, because

institutional investors are often organizations which are based on strong, common values such as churches or non-governmental organizations. (Jansson & Biel 2011b)

Similar distinction between professional roles and private citizens was not applied in the empirical part of this study. Thus the middle managers who were interviewed were freely able to choose which of these two approaches they would use in their answers. As the empirical results show, most of the interviewees at least started the interview from the personal approach, even though some of them also pointed out issues from the professional and organizational approach later on.

Regarding the middle manager interviews, it seemed that when more concrete and daily issues were talked about, the interviewees more easily talked from the organizational approach. But as the interviews were started with overall understanding and perceptions of corporate social responsibility, the middle managers also started from a more philosophical viewpoint and personal perceptions. Also the interview context enabled the personal approach to be described and talked about, as in the interview there were two employees of the same organization discussing the different ways of understanding and approaching CSR.

Most likely the results concerning middle managers of the case company would have been fairly different, if they would have been asked two different questions. First of these questions would have concentrated on CSR and its meaning personally and the second one would have been from the case company's organizational viewpoint. The motives of CSR and also the concrete actions that come to mind would most probably have been different between these two.

On other hand the investors interviewed for this study answered strictly from the organizational viewpoint of the investment institutions which they represented, the answers being consistent with the results presented in the theoretical background. In these interviews the overall setting of the interview was a clear influencing factor, as the

interview was organized with an aim of understanding the investment institutions' way of approaching SRI through interviewing the representatives of the institution. The interviewees were aware of this focus and thus there was no space left for their own thoughts and perceptions. The interviews were clearly situations between representatives of two organizations.

All this leads to interesting reflections. From a personal viewpoint different values seem to be important for both private investors as well as middle managers of the case company. When CSR or SRI is approached personally, the approach is strongly connected to the personal values of the interviewee. But when people are interviewed as representatives of their organizations, they most probably are affected by the expectations related to their professional roles as well as guidelines and policies which they are required to follow. This was shown in the investor studies reviewed in the theoretical background and supported by the investor interviews of this study, but was not empirically researched in the case company, so only assumptions can be made at this stage regarding the company's organizational approach. However, it could be assumed that from the case company's organizational approach the interviewees would have concentrated more on benefits and even financial gains of the case company resulting from CSR activities.

So, may we assume, and it strongly looks like it, that individual citizens are guided by a range of personal values even when for example making investments or being members of an organization. But when these people are in their professional roles, representing organizations such as investment institutions or some company, they are much more restricted and are often guided to act significantly more strongly based on financial measures than how they would act as individual citizens.

Many questions arise based on this reflection. Societies and all the different kinds of organizations are finally composed of individuals with a great range of different values, so why are certain organizations restricted so strongly to only financial gains? Is the

range of values for example among the owners of companies so wide that they just cannot be taken into account, leading to restricted financial considerations? How is the contradiction between personal and professional approaches visible in big organizations and the daily decisions all over the organizations? Do employees and managers apply other values in their daily work than just financial considerations and how this affects in the financial results and other achievements of the companies in the short and long term? What actually are the achievements that should be followed and measured, considering that private investors as such, private investors behind investment institutions and for example employees have a range of other values beside financial gains? This list could be continued, but in the end one of the main questions is again: what is and should be the role and meaning of business in society and who can decide about these?

5.3 Practical consequences

In this study it has been shown that the interviewed investors had very structured approach towards ESG-issues in their investments' operations and they agreed between themselves on the meaning of taking these into account, which was about having better risk-reward –profile. Contrary to this, the case company's middle managers had very unstructured understandings on CSR and represented several different ways of thinking on why business should take CSR into account. In addition, there was fairly little overlap in the understandings of the investors and the case company's middle managers.

So what practical consequences do the differing understandings have? What do these differing understandings mean for investors or case company's Investor Relations' personnel or company management? These issues are going to be reflected in this chapter.

First of all the investors understanding means in practice that they are very interested in knowing which ESG-issues are actually material for their investments and how these material ESG-issues are managed in the companies. This was shown also through the

empirical data of this study. Basically the investors would like to see companies to detect the significant risks related to ESG-issues and manage those just like any other risks, because of their materiality for the investors' risk-reward –profile.

Beside the risk approach, it is of course great if a company can change some of the current trends in society, such as climate change, into an opportunity for the company itself. But otherwise the investors aren't interested about CSR issues, if the concept is thought more widely. For example the investors might see that very good relationships with company's stakeholders may lower risks and might affect the company's operations in a positive way. But if the relationships with company's stakeholders have traditionally been very good, then some very wide efforts to yet increase the level of these relationships may be a bit questionable from the perspective of investors, as there seems to be no great risk to be lowered neither any significant operational benefits to be gained.

For companies the investors' understanding is most clearly visible through the investors' demands for communicating ESG-issues. Investors would like to have dense reports on the material ESG-issues and their management, alongside with the normal financial reporting. Beside this, many international investors may send different kinds of questionnaires for companies in order to get more specific information from them. These questionnaires are also purely concentrated on ESG-related risks and opportunities and the management of these inside a company.

For the investor relations (IR) personnel and company's management these information requirements mean that they should most importantly be able to explain in investor meetings the company's way of understanding the ESG-issues and their materiality in the company's operations. They should have good justifications on why some issues are material and others, which might very well be, actually aren't material. They should also be able to explain how the material issues are managed in the company and for example what kind of internal processes are in place for handling the risks. It would also be good

to be able to explain how the controlling of these risks is internally monitored and reported.

Beside the risk approach, it would be good if IR and company management are also able to explain what kind of opportunities global trends related to ESG-issues represent for their company, what is done in order to realize these opportunities and what kind of financial implications these might have in the future. Of course the global trends can cause either opportunities or risks and both approaches must be handled.

Then let's turn to look at the way of understanding of the case company's middle managers. The case company's middle managers' understandings of CSR seemed to be fairly closely linked with corporate values and ethical ways of working. All in all the middle managers seemed to need strong corporate values as a basis for their everyday work and seemed to feel that the corporate values truly support them in their work. Many of the middle managers seemed relieved that they can follow their own values, which they felt were closely aligned with the corporate values, and aren't thus forced to act in ways which would not feel comfortable. These thoughts they also linked closely with CSR.

In this sense the development work done in the company after the interviews related to the corporate values seems to be in place in fostering the sense of strong corporate values and the importance of following them. The strong corporate values may create a good working atmosphere in the company, increase middle managers' commitment and give relief in possibly stressful situations. They also help to lead the company in the direction indicated by the corporate values. However, the corporate values aren't basically at all interesting from the investors' viewpoint.

From the investors' viewpoint the corporate values aren't any kind of sufficient internal process for controlling for example risks related to unethical behavior, even though the work related to corporate values may of course increase obedience among employees.

The corporate values and their development are also too vague and intangible for the investors, as anything related to the values is extremely hard to measure. Thus, corporate values are a theme which is most likely very hard to handle by the investors, even though it might be very good for the employees internally.

This raises a great contradiction. At the same time the corporate culture in the case company is such that corporate values seem to be a strong tool for leading the company to a certain direction, to increase well-being at work and actually lower many risks related to ESG-issues as well. The development through fostering corporate values seems to fit well into the company and the middle management seems to appreciate this kind of development. However, for investors this kind of approach for the management of ESG-risks is extremely hard, as the investors have a very structured way through which they would like to see companies answering to the challenges of ESG-risks. Development related to corporate values and culture does not seem to fit to the investors' ideas, even though it might be the most efficient way to actually develop these issues in the case company.

The case company's middle managers connected CSR closely with corporate values, ethical ways of working, "doing what is right" and other similar ideas, even though also understanding of CSR as the company's benefit in the long term was brought up. The difference of this understanding compared to the investors' way of understanding CSR seems to lead to many practical consequences. For example to a reluctance to develop formal processes inside the company for minimizing some of the material ESG-risks or develop reporting related to these, which are both issues investors would like to see.

The reluctance to develop formal processes and reporting does not mean that the material ESG-risks wouldn't be managed at all, but instead of formal processes, the management of these on the corporate level is done more strongly through corporate culture and corporate values. In addition to these, there are largely differing practices all over the company to make the values and culture visible concretely in everyday action.

These differing practices are optimized for the situation of a certain unit and might be so different from one unit to another, that no companywide reporting or process descriptions can be established based on these. But from the company's internal perspective this seems to work and the material ESG-risks seem to be under control, even though very differently than what many of the investors would like them to be.

Then it is the challenge of mostly IR personnel to create understandable communication between the case company and its investors. This task is challenging, though, as the ways of thinking of investors and middle managers are so different and the case company's internal development follows the practices which are suitable for the company from the internal perspective. However, as the case company follows the practices which seem to suit best for it regarding its corporate culture, it is also the benefit of the investors in the long term. It is just very hard for the investors to know whether to trust the corporate culture and values -based development of the case company or not, as it is so different from the purely risk management based approach.

5.4 Summary: answering the research questions

The research questions of this study are gone through one by one in this chapter and they are answered in a very short and summarized way. In a more lengthy way the questions have been answered throughout this study. The first research question and its subquestion was the following:

- What kinds of understandings of CSR exist?
 - How do selected investors and case company's middle managers understand the concept of corporate social responsibility?

In this study the concept of “an understanding of corporate social responsibility” was defined to include three different aspects. These aspects were motives for CSR, concrete actions of CSR and its expected consequences. First the different understandings of CSR

were reviewed based on existing literature especially in Chapters 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4. Several different kinds of understandings were presented in Chapters 2.1 and 2.2 but in the end mainly two distinct understandings of CSR were detected, one concentrating on CSR from society's viewpoint and the other from the company's or shareholders' viewpoint. These understandings were especially different regarding the motives for CSR, which then seemed to affect also for example to the selection of CSR activities. However, this theoretical part concentrated mostly on the motivational factors and consequences of CSR, with only slightly touching on the concrete actions.

Also Chapter 2.4 continued to answer to this question in the theoretical background. In this chapter the focus was in different kinds of investors and their different understandings of CSR. Based on this review it was concluded that there is also great variation in the understandings of different kinds of investors. For private investors values seemed to be important whereas investment institutions were purely motivated by financial considerations.

The empirical study continued to shed light on this question as well as gave an answer to its subquestion. The interviewed investors, which represented investment institutions, had a very clear and well-defined understanding of CSR and socially responsible investment whereas the middle managers were less structured in their thoughts. The investors were purely motivated by financial considerations and especially beliefs about reduced risks. The middle managers approached the issues mainly from a personal viewpoint and understood CSR strongly as an issue connected to personal and corporate values, even though they also recognized CSR as beneficial for the case company in the long term. However, despite of the strongly differing motives for CSR, both the investors and middle managers saw CSR to result in very similar concrete actions, including for example ethical ways of working and rejection of the grey economy.

In the reflections in Chapter 5.2 also the differences between personal and organizational approaches were reflected upon. It seems that when personal viewpoints are considered,

even in the case of private investors, a wide range of values affect in the understanding of CSR or SRI. But when these are approached from professional roles and organizational viewpoints, then the application of different values is much more restricted and financial measures are emphasized.

- What kinds of consequences do these understandings have on the development of corporate social responsibility in the case company?

The practical consequences of the results of this study for the case company are described in length in Chapter 5.3. But in short one of the biggest challenges for the case company is to overcome the contradiction between the value-based internal development and the desires and viewpoints of the investors. Basically there is a great communicational challenge for the IR personnel in explaining the case company's internal ways of approaching and developing issues related to CSR, as these are not totally aligned with the ways investors would prefer to see development taking place.

5.5 Evaluation of the research

Several characteristics of this study may be evaluated and reflected upon. These issues include for example the case study nature of this study and the special context related to it. Also the interviews conducted and their content is one factor strongly affecting the results of this study, as well as the analysis of the interview data. Thirdly the role of the interviewer and writer of this study as an employee of the case company is one factor to be evaluated.

This study was a qualitative case study, the context of the study concentrating geographically in Finland and especially in the construction and building service industry regarding the case company. The investor viewpoint concentrated on major investment institutions operating in Finland. The special characteristics of this context were discussed in Chapter 3.1. This context of the study affects to some extent on the

generalizability of the results of this study. The investors' understanding of CSR and SRI is well structured and it is probable that their viewpoint may be generalized to other western countries. This is also supported by the fact that one of the investors included in this study was a strongly international company and their understanding was consistent with the investors operating mainly in Finland.

The case company's middle managers' understanding of CSR is much more restricted than that of the investors. The case company operates in the field of construction and building services, which limits for example the scope of the content issues discussed related to CSR. However, also the distinct corporate culture and value bases of the case company was strongly pointed out, indicating that the results related to the case company may be totally restricted to this case and may not give any guidance on results that could be achieved in some other case company, even from the same field of operations.

However, in the reflections for example the understandings of private persons were compared with those of people in their professional roles, representing the organizational viewpoint. These reflections may be totally valid in a larger context than that of this case study and indication towards this direction was given in the theoretical background. Still it should be remembered that the reflections presented in this study regarding this subject went much further than what the results of this study showed as concrete results, meaning that the reflections contained a lot of hypothetical thoughts with little empirical evidence.

The interviews used in this study as empirical data were conducted a couple of years before the writing of this study and were not designed to specifically answer the research questions of this study. Instead, the interviews provided data for a wide range of interests and thus only parts of especially the middle managers' interviews were used in this study. Because of this it can be questioned whether the empirical data was as good as it could have been from the viewpoint and scope of this study. The interview questions

could have been designed slightly differently if the interviews would have been conducted only for the purpose of this study, including for example more provocative questions to challenge the understandings of the interviewees and get possibly even deeper nuances of their understandings.

The interviewer and writer of this study was an employee of the case company during the whole time that this study was conducted. Some of the interviewees inside the case company were familiar with the writer of this study. For the investors the interviewee was also a representative of the case company and was thus not a totally independent interviewee. This fact may have had both positive and negative effects on the empirical data gained during the interviews.

Among the middle managers the interviewees may have felt more comfortable in describing their understandings for the interviewer, as the interview was more like a friendly discussion between two employees of the company than a totally independent interview. In an independent interview conducted by someone outside of the case company, the middle managers could have been more careful in presenting their ideas and understanding than in this case. However, regarding the investors interviews the interviews were discussions between two organizations of which the interviewee's organization is an owner in the case company represented by the interviewer. In this setting there exist more tensions than what there would be between a totally independent interviewee and representatives of the investors. Still the answers of the investors were so structured that it is probable that the answers do not greatly differ from a situation of a totally independent interviewer.

Finally the specific background, skills and knowledge base of the writer of this study has naturally affected in all parts of this study, including for example the selection of the articles for the theoretical background, the interviews and their analysis as well as the reflections presented based on the results of this study. This is normal in strongly qualitative studies but it may be that some other researcher would have not ended up

with the similar kinds of interpretations and reflections based on the material of this study. However, this does not totally remove the value of this study as different viewpoints have been presented also to be confirmed and researched further in future research.

5.6 Topics for future research

CSR has been somewhat studied during the recent decades. However, this study concentrated on the different understandings of CSR and the effects of these, which is a fairly little researched area inside the wide field of CSR-research. What this study indicated is that CSR actually is approached in very different ways and that the debate of the meaning of CSR and the role of business in society is still ongoing.

One of the most potential areas for future research based on this study seems to be related to the challenge of existing differences between personal and professional viewpoints or between individuals and organizations. People seem to approach CSR in very different ways from a personal viewpoint than from an organizational viewpoint. First of all this should be studied more whether this is actually the case. If there is a great contradiction between these two ways of understanding and approaching CSR, then it could be studied further on what the implications of this are, what causes the difference and should organizations actually approach the understanding of individuals. After all, it is individuals who are the customers, employees, managers and owners of the organizations.

Another area of future research could be related to the reflections of business' role in society. It could for example be studied what people see as the role of business to be in society and what they think it should be, as well as what kinds of consequences the different roles would have in society. Interesting research subjects could also be for example case studies on how different organizational values have developed, are there similar organizations which actually have very different value approaches and so on.

Also the practical representations of CSR could be studied further on. In this study it was shown that in the scope of the case which was researched, different understandings of CSR led however to very similar concrete actions of CSR. Thus the relation between the motives for CSR and the concrete outcomes of CSR could be studied more: is it more generally so that even if the motives might be different, after all very similar actions are desired?

This study was also a case study and was thus very limited in its scope. The same research questions which were investigated in this study would need much more research from different contexts so that more could be said about the existing understandings of CSR and their implications. For example more case studies from different fields and different countries would support in forming a wider understanding of CSR in today's business world. Also longitudinal studies could bring added value in showing how the understandings of CSR develop over time.

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Appendix 1: Frame for the investors' interviews

The interviewee

- Work tasks of the interviewee?
- How is the case company related to the interviewee's work? Has the interviewee been in contact with the case company and how?

Socially responsible investment

- What does SRI mean for your organization?
- According to which kinds of criteria you choose your investments?
- How important is CSR in the selection of the investments? Priorities?
- What kind of issues do you expect from the investments regarding CSR?
- How do you analyze the level of CSR of your potential investments?
 - Where do you search information for the analysis?
- How is the acknowledgment of CSR visible in general in your role as an owner?
- How are the issues of SRI been organized in your organization?

Objectives and motives

- What are your objectives for SRI?
- Why SRI is important for you?

More specific issues

- Does it matter whether your investment has been certified according to e.g. ISO 14001 or whether it applies ISO 26000?
- Does it matter whether your investment has announced to follow international norms and contracts such as UN's Global Compact or ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work?
- Do you appreciate if your investments are listed in international sustainability indices such as Dow Jones Sustainability Index?
- Do you stress some of the three viewpoints: economic, social and environmental responsibility?

Reporting and stakeholder collaboration

- How would you like your investments to report about CSR?
 - Web pages, a separate CSR report, integrated with the annual report, some other way
- What kind of content themes would you like to know about regarding your investments' CSR?

- What are the most material themes to be reported?
- How would you like to be connected with your investments regarding the CSR issues? Communication channels?

The case company

- What is your general image of the case company?
- How responsibly does the case company operate according to your opinion?
- What there is to improve in the CSR of the case company and related reporting?
- Do you feel you are getting sufficiently information about the CSR of the case company?
- What are the most important elements of the case company's CSR activities?
 - For example social (occupational safety), environmental (energy efficiency), economic (long-term profitability)
- Do you have opinions on what the case company should concentrate on regarding the three viewpoints of CSR?
- Are you satisfied on the Investor Relations' work of the case company? Some feedback on that?

Anything else comes to your mind?

Appendix 2: Frame for the middle managers' interviews

The interviewee

- Name, work assignments, history in the case company
- What issues are under the responsibility of the interviewee?

Understanding

- What comes to your mind from the concept of “corporate social responsibility”?
- How well according to corporate social responsibility the case company/own business unit operates from your viewpoint?
- What has already been done related to this?
- What could be improved?
- Have you encountered corporate social responsibility in your work? Has it been talked about?

A short review by the interviewer on what is meant by corporate social responsibility in this context and what kind of issues it covers.

Economic responsibility

- What the case company/own business unit/etc. does now, that could be seen as economically responsible action?
- What things have been well taken care off?
- What things could be improved?

Environmental responsibility

- What the case company/own business unit/etc. does now, that could be seen as environmentally responsible action?
 - environmentally friendly products and services
 - environmental issues in our internal operations
- What things have been well taken care off?
- What things could be improved?

Social responsibility

- What the case company/own business unit/etc. does now, that could be seen as socially responsible action?
 - socially friendly products and services

- social issues in our internal operations
- What things have been well taken care off?
- What things could be improved?

Expectations of our stakeholders

- With what kind of stakeholders do you interact in your work?
- Do different stakeholders seem to have expectations related to the case company's corporate social responsibility? What kinds of expectations?
- Do you believe that different stakeholders (such as public administration, owners/shareholders, customers, personnel, partners in co-operation, competitors, media, civic organizations...) appreciate responsible business and corporate social responsibility?
- Does this appreciation become visible in their actions towards the case company?
- Is it significant for yourself how responsibly the case company acts?
 - responsible products and services
 - responsibility in our internal operations

The advantages and disadvantages of corporate responsibility

- What benefits could there be for the case company from CSR?
 - responsible products and services
 - responsibility in our internal operations
- What disadvantages could there be for the case company from CSR?
 - responsible products and services
 - responsibility in our internal operations

General (if not yet discussed in the interview)

- Are the standards ISO 14001 and ISO 9001 already in use in your business unit/segment?
- Are there any development projects/master's thesis works going on or coming related to CSR? Possible schedules for these?
- What kind of priorities do the issues related to CSR have?
- Anything else to mention?